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Chucking Smith

A British Foreign Secretary has to talk to Ian Smith – and perhaps to visit Salisbury, though that was more questionable – because Smith still holds effective power. But it should never be forgotten that the Smith regime is illegal: as illegal as the Tshombe regime in Katanga, against which the resources of the United Nations were mobilised in 1960. Smith and his forces are combatants in a country with no internationally recognised authority, and in that sense are on a footing with Robert Mugabe and his guerrillas. The only distinction is in Mugabe's favour; while it cannot be proved that he has the allegiance of a majority of the people, Smith by definition can have the allegiance of no more than a small minority – the 270,000 (out of 6 million) with white skins, and not all of them. And there is something else, still more to the point, that should never be forgotten: the only proper objective of British policy is to deprive Smith of his power as rapidly as possible. We naturally hope that it can be done without grievous bloodshed, but the central principle is that it must be done.

It is, in African eyes, primarily a British responsibility. Britain, from 1923 onwards, countenanced the rule of the settlers and made Rhodesia an exception to the rule that 'native interests are paramount'; Britain declined in 1965 to take the swift military action that might have nipped the Smith regime in the bud; and since then Britain has chalked up a sorry record of inadequate sanctions (evaded by powerful British companies, who have suffered little for it) and of attempts at deals which sacrificed the principle of 'no independence before majority rule'. No wonder that the onus is still on the British Government to prove that it is at last taking the right course.

Four things are needed. First, a clear political guideline for a future Zimbabwe – a guideline which must have African confidence and must be established whether Smith agrees to it or not. This should emerge from the meetings projected by Dr Owen for the coming summer. Secondly, effective sanctions which will really deprive Smith of petrol for his helicopters, ammunition for his guns, and mercenary manpower. It is equally important to deprive him of his trading outlets other than South Africa, and here the American ban on chrome should help. Thirdly, a promise of money (it has to be US money, and the prospects seem good) to buy out the waverers among the white population. To rely on buying without other action would be illusory, but as a lubricant of change it should be useful. Fourthly, a determination that if Smith does not relinquish his power peacefully he will be overthrown. Dr Owen showed courage when, on Rhodesian television, he described the guerrillas as 'men of goodwill being driven to take up arms'; this is the language that self-deluding whites (and blacks yearning for liberation) should have heard in British accents long ago. Now that Kissinger has gone, to restrain the guerrillas and 'keep out the Cubans' should cease to be an aim of Western policy. In the last resort, intervention by UN forces would be fully justified.

Dr Owen has evidently earned a welcome from Africans, partly because he is the Foreign Secretary and has departed from the mistaken practice of allotting the problem to an emissary of secondary status, partly because of his personal qualities, his energy and seriousness. We can say: 'So far, so good.' Dr Owen himself would say no more than this, and doubtless knows that he is only at the beginning of a task which will call for persistence and resolution. But the unhappy Geneva conference confirmed what a long record has demonstrated – that Smith is a twister of the highest order. His plan is always to seem to endorse an agreement with sighs of virtuous resignation, and then find ways to nullify its implementation. At present his hopes rest on stringing the rest of the world along until there is a Tory government in London, willing to assist him in halting an uncompleted transfer of power. This strategy will fail only if the pressure is kept up – both on the sanctions front and the guerrilla front – and if movement toward the decisive point of political change is sustained and fairly swift. We have no right to dally. We owe Zimbabwe all the years since 1965.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Grimsby's Bionic Man

'It's Steve Austin!' 'It's Warren Mitchell!' 'It's Steve Austin Mitchell!' The children of Grimsby rush up and down the street. An old woman touches my arm: 'Excuse me, young man, is Austin here?' I explain that he's a couple of doors further down. 'I'll wait for him then,' she says, laying down her shopping; 'it's so exciting, isn't it, I mean to see him in the flesh. It's not the same on television, is it? By the way,' she asks, 'what's Austin's first name?' 'His name's Austin Mitchell. There he is, coming out of that house.' 'Oh yes. Hey, come over here, Austin, I want to meet you. Aaah, there, isn't he lovely. And to think of all the times I've seen you on the telly, and now I can hold your hand in mine. . . .'

I thought of the other by-election candidates Labour had picked recently. Dale Campbell-Savours, David Winnick – who would have wanted to hold their hands? Who would have pestered them for autographs? Which of them could match, or even approach, the sensational effect of Our Man in Grimsby? He's a celebrity all right, and he needs every ounce of his celebrity if he's to scrape through. The vicar of St James's preached a rather good sermon here last Sunday, at the Sung Eucharist, encouraging us to ignore the certainties of fact in favour of faith and hope. I recommend the same course to Austin Mitchell, in his attempt to break the tyranny of the swingometer.

For it may well be that, despite the excitement aroused, his television celebrity is a drawback. One man shut the door angrily, saying how he disliked his television performances. Others have said that they consider Mitchell something of a clown. The men tend to say that he's not serious, that he only appeals to the women. He certainly does appeal to the women – but will they vote for him? They may quite simply draw a distinction between politics and entertainment. Ideally the Mitchell campaign should present two Austin Mitchells: for those who seek entertainment, the Yorkshire TV personality; for those who want a serious politician, Dr Austin Mitchell, the celebrated university lecturer, author of *The Whigs in Opposition* (OUP), *Government by Party, Politics and People in New Zealand*, and – oh dear, oh dear – *The Half Gallon Quarter Acre Pavlova Paradise, Yorkshire Jokes* and *Teach Thissen Tyke*.

Thissen list of Mitchell's works tells us a lot about the man. His personality is poised uneasily between the intellectual and the folksy. The folksy side can turn one's stomach. He has a nauseating habit (he should cure himself – it's not too late) of fending off perfectly legitimate questions with an appeal to simple folk – as if the people of Grimsby were a sort of Doddy Diddymen. The questioning at one of his press conferences went along these lines. Where does Mitchell stand in the Labour Party – left, right or centre? He doesn't like labels. All right, but would he, if elected, join the *Tribune* Group, or the Manifesto Group, or neither? He doesn't know, he says; he would, if approached, consider the arguments on either side. At this point he is told to come off it, that he wasn't born yesterday, and that he must have some notion of where he stands. Hereupon he goes folksy and starts talking about clever southern journalists arriving and asking trick questions which had nothing to do with the sort of people he's talking to every day on the streets, etc, etc. One is astonished by the thin skin of the experienced interviewer once the roles are reversed.

He is often evasive. On Tuesday night, at a large public meeting, he was asked about his attitude to the nationalisation of banking and insurance. His reply, dramatically delivered, went something like this: 'If you ask me whether I think that every banking and insurance firm should be nationalised, my reply is that I do (*barely audible noise*) think that every banking and insurance firm should be nationalised.' Then he sat down, leaving everyone in the dark. Had he said 'not', or was there a frog in his throat? In fact he had said 'not', and obviously panicked a little in the middle of saying it. Even so, the answer was evasive: he had said '*not every* banking and insurance firm'.

He is, however, a political man, violently anti-EEC (I'm sure he would have us straight out again, at the first opportunity) but not, I should say, a Tribuneite. We got him to say that he was a social democrat, but we didn't get very far in discovering what he meant by that. He seemed to think that the term meant that he was a socialist and a democrat. This is, of course, a good start for a Labour candidate. Hopeful party workers – and they are not, as far as one can see, too few – suggest that he might be, for Grimsby, the equivalent of Geoffrey Robinson in Coventry. By this they mean that he will fight a campaign so good, so sincere that it will be able to reverse the trend of recent polls. Alas, the analogy does not really hold, since Geoffrey Robinson was a managerial figure well-known and liked in the dominant local industry. His equivalent, in Grimsby, is the Tory candidate, Robbie Blair.

Blair may have been a second thought on the part of the Grimsby Tories, but he was certainly a very good idea. An Aberdonian who has lived and worked in the area roughly since the war, and in Birds Eye to boot, with a son in the fish-filleting business, he knows what he's on about when talking in the docks. Mitchell has learnt up a lot, but he cannot really convey the same impression of deep concern about an ailing industry.

Blair is not very political – but he doesn't have to be. All he has to do is join in the grumbling. I watched Mitchell at midnight talking to the lumpers (fish porters) as they unloaded the ships and later as the catches were being sold and gutted, I watched Blair talking to the merchants, porters and filleters. The first occasion was friendly enough, but it involved long arguments about why's and wherefores. The second occasion (where admittedly the merchant class dominated the scene) showed clearly the Tory success in appealing to the industry. Large numbers of people wore Blair's stickers, and the reception he received was excellent. He did not argue – for the most part at least he did not have to.

The evidence of the decline of the industry was there for anyone to see: the scarcity of ships, the trawlers laid up for scrap, the size of the catch. All Blair had to do was to point out how little work people had to do. 'Might as well go and fish off the harbour wall,' said one filleter. 'That's not the way to get fish,' said Blair, 'the only way to get fish is to do some banging of the tables with the Russians – that's what we've got to do.' I tried to imagine this small figure banging the table with the Russians. It was not easy. Two of the merchants passed the BBC team at work filming. 'What's this,' said one, 'part two of *The Vanishing World?*' 'Another episode of *Survival*', said the other

All kinds of reasons have been adduced for not voting Labour in Grimsby this time: Austin Mitchell is not a local man, there is a traditional animus against Yorkshire, Robbie Blair understands the fishing industry better, and so on. But in the end such reasons are only brought forward by those who will not admit their deeper feeling – that Labour is to blame. To blame for the decline of fishing, to blame for inflation, to blame for unemployment. At the Tuesday night meeting and throughout the campaign Mitchell has been trying to lay the blame elsewhere; Michael Foot and a rather self-satisfied John Silkin came to his aid, with vigorous attacks on the EEC. Unfortunately the blame just will not go away. The rational arguments are useless. The dire warnings of a Tory future do not convince. The blame hangs in the air, like a terrible, pestilential miasma. The wind does not blow it away. It does not disperse over night. It is there in the morning and it is there in the evening. No Labour candidate, however glamorous or even good, can escape the blame.

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Alexander Cockburn

Carter the Manichean

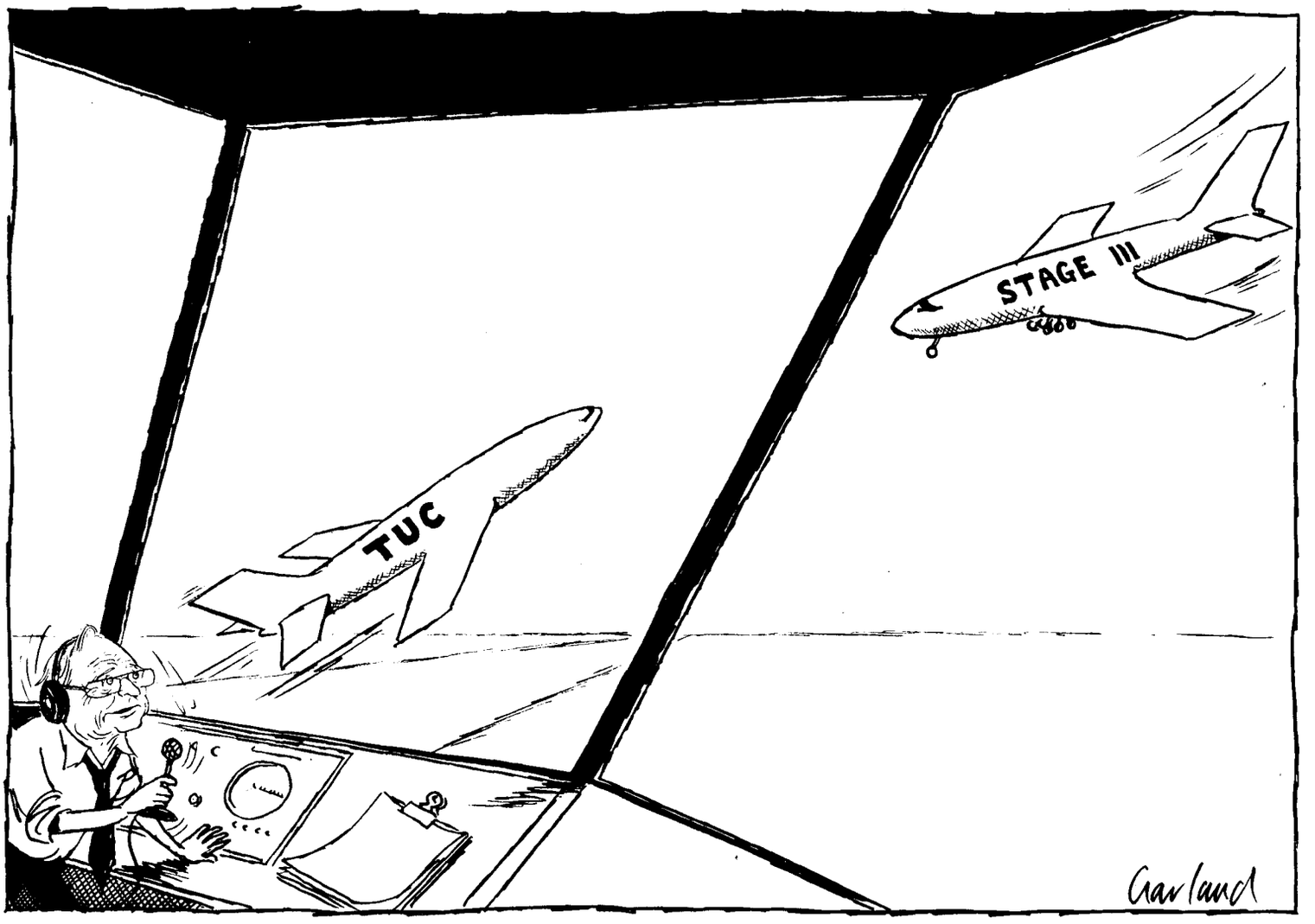
It has been touted for weeks now as 'the greatest test' he is likely to face as President. Consequently the fanfare of publicity preceding Carter's promulgation of a new energy plan for the United States has been tremendous. Last week there was a special televised programme showing Carter hard at work in the White House. Following this *mise en scène*, there was another televised address to the nation on Monday with Carter 'dressed' – as the *New York Times* put it – 'in a pin-striped suit rather than a cardigan, evidently to emphasise the seriousness of the situation'. On Wednesday Carter put his proposals to a joint session of Congress, also televised. This Friday he holds another televised press conference. By which time, it is hoped, the American people will know that great things are afoot and the price of gas is bound to go up.

Not that Carter, inevitably 'grim-faced' in these hours, is the first President in history to tell the people that they face an energy crisis. Franklin Roosevelt said the same thing in 1939. And of course it was not so long ago that Richard Nixon, also grim-faced, announced 'Project Independence' – freedom from foreign sources of energy by 1980. Going back even earlier, the US geological survey was saying in the early 1920s that domestic supplies of oil would soon expire. But Carter and his team of energy advisers headed by James Schlesinger have thrown everything into the great, if familiar, bid to convince the citizenry that it faces disaster unless prodigal ways are mended, facts faced, belts tightened, teeth gritted and wallets opened.

The American people will naturally listen approvingly to calls for sacrifice, just so long as they can do so in well-heated (or well air-conditioned) homes, or in commodious automobiles powered by petrol selling at 60 cents a gallon. American oil and gas producers also enjoy the talk about sacrifice if they can double the price of their product and at last dispose of hated regulation of the price of their products. American industrialists echo requests for greater conservation of energy just so long as this process does not mean the installation of costly controls in their plants. Just about the only people who do not appear to be eagerly joining in the crusade are the poor, who well know that 'sacrifice' means a hike in the cost of living and who therefore have been stubbornly telling pollsters that the energy crisis is a plot by big business.

It is indeed important to understand what the basic strategy of the big energy companies has been over the last decade. It has involved diversification out of conventional oil production into other energy sources – strip-mine coal, nuclear plants, synthetic fuels, off-shore drilling, importation of liquid natural gas and removal of controls on the price of natural gas in general. This last has been a campaign of the energy companies for many years. Interstate prices have been officially pegged, even though the peg has naturally crawled upwards. The result has been the continuous proclamation of 'shortages' as the gas producers (in essence the major oil companies) have held back production in expectation that controls will finally be removed.

The central thrust has been the notion that the country must shift towards nuclear power and coal, with a surge in the price of energy generally. This is what President Carter has, among other things, proposed. Now, it would be ludicrous to argue that there is not indeed a long-term energy crisis confronting the United States, just as much as it confronts every other country in the world. The crisis has been ludicrously overstated, though, most lately in a declassified CIA report released at the start of this week by the White House. This report,



'Er, Control to Captain Healey, er, sorry, but you'd better alter your course – Control to Captain Healey . . .'

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relying on industry statistics, says that the full force of an energy crisis will break over the United States by the early 1980s. Such talk can be set in the glorious tradition of US geological survey estimates like the one from the 1920s mentioned earlier.

Carter has now said that Americans use too much energy, waste too much energy and pay too little for it. This translates into programmes for conservation (such as the insulation of private homes), penalisation for unwarranted petrol consumption (as in large cars) and for more 'realistic' pricing (bigger utility bills). Beyond this he has said that the country must move towards greater use of coal and of nuclear power. The coal can either come from deep mines in Appalachia or from strip mines in the West presently inconvenienced by environmental regulations. The nuclear power will come from an accelerated programme for building reactors, also presently inconvenienced by environmentalists. The fast breeder reactor, using plutonium, remains in disgrace. Solar power is invoked, even though its impact on general energy consumption will remain fairly negligible for the next 20 years.

This is the impetus of what the President called last Monday 'the moral equivalent of war'. The programme is predicated on the assumption that the country can slow its consumption of energy; above all that the programme can survive its next phase of existence, which is entry into the real political world of the US Congress and of the conflicting desires of all the major American interest groups.

To cite – as they say – some of the contradictions: Carter and his supporters in Congress will have to try to persuade the auto companies and auto unions that it is right to penalise large cars, which is precisely what the auto companies are selling most of. Such an argument will include a battle over auto emission controls, mandatory under the law and detested by the auto companies. Congressional representatives of the gas and oil consuming states of the North East will battle against the prospect of increased prices for consumers, while corresponding representatives from the South West will hotly contest any continued regulation of prices, fighting what they regard as Carter's outrageous emphasis on conservation rather than incentives for greater production. And the energy companies will attack environmental restraints, pledged by the President.

In short, nothing closely resembling the programme outlined by the President last Wednesday will ever emerge from Congress. At the moment, but not for long, everyone is prepared to applaud the need for 'decisive action' and general getting to grips with the situation. But a change in the patterns of energy use in an advanced industrial country in the world cannot be applauded into existence after stirring bouts of rhetoric. Of course, Carter is bravely saying that his programme will please no one; but this is only the virtuous way of hoping to please everybody.

Fundamental in any new energy policy is the matter of who is going to pay for it in the end. Will it be the large industrial users and wasters of energy, such as the petro-chemical companies? Or the large suppliers of energy such as the oil companies? Or will it mainly be consumers, told that prices 'should generally reflect the true replacement cost of energy', but also that they will get tax rebates? Amid general inflation of the cost of production and the cost of living, who will really carry the burden? What has so far happened in the President's response to the contradictory demands of business and labour is not particularly encouraging. In the months that lie ahead, we shall find out among which group he is prepared to see his popularity drop by the ten points he and his staff have been gallantly talking about over the last few weeks.

New York

David Leitch

Giscard the Legionnaire

Until the evening of 10 April, I can say with confidence, Zaire was a distant (though big) country of which the French happily knew little. Then up popped President Giscard on television, equipped with a map of Africa, an expression appropriate to emergency, and a surprisingly Gaullist turn of phrase.

He was speaking, he said, not just for France but for Europe. Zaire was 'the victim of subversive activities launched from a foreign territory'. In these circumstances 'an indifferent Europe would be deeply blameworthy'. As for his own country – and here the presidential voice took on a swelling, portentous tone – 'France will never abandon those African states who are her friends.'

The French decision to intervene by air-lifting Moroccan troops and *matériel* was not, he emphasised, something he had dreamed up. It was the fruit of profound reflection – a point that officials were also keen to underline. Giscard himself, they pointed out, had visited Zaire in August 1975 at an epoch when any air-lifting in the region was being undertaken by the Soviet Union via what is now effectively their own base at Luanda in Angola. The US was no more prepared to take action then than now. Thus France, on the eve of the Dakar conference which on 19 April assembled all the so-called 'francophone' African states which have cooperation treaties with their former colonial boss, was ready to demonstrate her responsibility as a *gendarme*.

The French intervention will certainly please these countries, whose cries of alarm at the 'Sovietisation' of Africa have been flooding in to Paris for some time. Giscard's words in fact echoed almost identically an alarm sounded by Félix Houphouët-Boigny, President of the Ivory Coast. This influential leader of what the French call the 'moderate' African camp declared that 'indifference' on the part of the Western world posed the risk of 'a new Vietnam.'

Although they have never been as well publicised as this one, French 'interventions' in Africa have in fact been far from uncommon throughout the Fifth Republic. They have, however, been highly selective, and often, particularly in the palmy days of the Elysée's splendidly named Secretary-General for African and Malagasy Affairs, the sinister Jacques Foccart, as clandestine as possible. It is very likely that De Gaulle intended something of the kind in West Africa in the spring of 1968.

Again the faithful Houphouët-Boigny played his part by supporting the Ibo secessionists from the Nigerian federation, an initiative which appealed to the General for a number of reasons. He liked the idea of dividing – and thus diminishing – British-West-African influence, quite apart from the prospect of oil concessions. The Ivory Coast, however, recognised Biafra in the month of May 1968, when there were little local difficulties in Paris which precluded any very serious activities in the heart of Africa. By September of the same year the desks were clear at home and the General was hinting at recognition of Biafra. But by then it was too late, since Port Harcourt had fallen and the secessionists were cut off.

This did not prevent Foccart's boys from dabbling in the conflict, many of them veterans of the days when Shaba was Katanga. The General on that occasion, in 1960-61, had declined to take part in the UN Congo operation (or to pay France's share of the costs). UN transport aircraft were also forbidden to fly over the same 'Francophone' countries and French 'advisers,' most of them serving officers, gave a helping hand when it came to resisting the UN Katanga forces.

The French were fighting in Gabon in 1964 and the Central African Republic three years later – on both occasions in order to preserve existing regimes. There was also the question of Tchad where French troops fought the northern, Arab-speaking 'dissidents' for so long that officials were finally obliged to admit, much in the spirit of the Victorian unmarried mother, that there was indeed a war going on up there near the Libyan border – but it was only a small one.

The action in Zaire, unlike most major French government initiatives of recent months, has been very much Giscard's personal project – for once it is the presidential set-up at the Elysée, rather than Prime Minister Barre's Matignon machine, which is taking control and making the statements. Whatever Giscard may feel about European or French responsibilities for containing the spread of Soviet influence in distant Africa,

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the major preoccupation is clearly nearer home. And, interestingly enough, the Zaire 'adventure', roundly condemned with perfect unanimity by both the French communists and their socialist allies, appears to have brought home certain political dividends. The French have a weakness for the rattling of sabres, particularly when there are no casualties to speak of. Pacifist or non-intervention lobbies consequently have something of a hard time.

The public, unless I have read them wrong, seem in this case to have derived a certain amount of quiet enjoyment from what has been presented as an African adventure which cost little. It would have been different had the troops been French national service conscripts, rather than elite Moroccan forces who are supposed to have won their spurs on the Syrian border in the last Arab-Israel conflict. The papers have dwelt with some gusto on the logistical details of the operation: elaborate secrecy in the Ministry of Defence underground war-room; pin-point night-time navigation at heights designed (apparently successfully) to evade radar recognition, and a system of replacing engines on deserted Francophone air-strips, rather than servicing them. The operation's *Boys' Own Paper* quality made good copy. *France-Soir* even went so far as to compare it with the Israelis' raid against Entebbe.

The Soviet ambassador in Paris, Stepan Chervonenko, naturally took a less upbeat view of the enterprise. After a visit to President Giscard he made some sour yet cagey comments about foreign intervention in Zaire's domestic affairs. However, it might have been much worse. There was no hint, for example, that the French action would in any way affect the highly-valued official midsummer visit to Paris by Leonid Brezhnev. And, even more surprising, there was an indication that Giscard might derive some indirect domestic political advantages, not so much from his own initiative as from the Left's ham-fisted reaction to it.

Jean Kanapa, the PCF's 'shadow' Foreign Minister, issued a long rhetorical statement to the effect that Giscard's irresponsible adventurism threatened to unleash war in the continent. Soviet policy, on the other hand, (which the French party fully supported), was dedicated to 'the pursuit of peace' in Africa. It sounded uncannily like the old unregenerated PCF following their Moscow masters on a leash.

The socialists, who should have known better, fully accepted Kanapa's analysis of the Shaba affair. Even Jean-Pierre Cot, their foreign affairs spokesman, was happy to agree in the interests of unanimity. This reaction, even more perhaps than Kanapa's demonstration of what the PCF's vaunted independent line was worth, has been a welcome gift to the Right.

The communists, so they can say, and indeed have been saying, are as pusillanimous when it comes to challenging Moscow on foreign affairs as they have ever been. And, worse, the socialists do not seem any more independent *vis-à-vis* their PCF allies, than Kanapa's boys themselves have proved to be on an occasion when Moscow is cracking the whip.

Paris

Laura Lilli

Rape – Italian Style

'It's not a question of beginning life all over again as you might think. I can forget nothing of what happened.'

From her bed in the San Camillo Hospital Claudia Caputi talked last week, in a frail voice and her Abruzzi accent, to her feminist comrades. They had come to give her the news that her attackers (seven of whom were put on trial, out of 16 who, she said, raped her on two occasions) had finally been sentenced. Altogether they received 20 years in prison; four for Carlo Sciarra, who was considered the leader (and who will be under 'particular vigilance' when he comes out); three for Bruno Lettieri and Giancarlo Carnassale; two and a half for Franco Sciarra, Nicola Vinciprova, Giuliano Mauro and Roberto Fracassini. These last four were given 'conditional' sentences and so will not go to prison.

'They're free, they're 20-year-olds, and everyone knows that in war guns fire themselves,' Lettieri's lawyer Ugo Tonna, said with some satisfaction. The other defence lawyers also greeted the court's decisions with similar comments. 'The girl asked for it.' 'They had to do it to show they were men.' 'She only had 16 bruises and all of them on her buttocks and breasts – everyone knows that sexual relations are violent.' 'Those people over there' (pointing to the women lawyers in court, Tina Lagostena Bassi and Maria Maguani Noya, a socialist deputy) 'are sending me threatening letters.' 'Then send them to the Public Prosecutor's Office if you want to – they have nothing to do with us,' said the Court President, Mario Lupi, and added curtly: 'I would like to remind these young men that the world of women, which is so dangerously attractive, is also the world of their mothers, sisters and future wives. So let us respect it. Let us try not to find ourselves in this court again.'

'No raping tonight, boys – just a bit of torture. That's still legal.'

And so this trial, which has been discussed by newspapers throughout Europe, has not only set Claudia (and the feminists who supported her) against her attackers; within the courtroom itself it also lined up the two cultures which are bidding for supremacy in Italy – the libertarian and feminist way of life, according to which a woman is as much a human being as a man, and which sees rape as a crime; and the archaic and patriarchal culture according to which a woman who is raped is always the guilty party.

Claudia Caputi is 19 years old and comes from Villalago, a village in southern Italy which now has a mere 879 inhabitants: 1,000 have emigrated over the past 20 years. It boasts a post office and a sort of bar, but nothing else – not even a police station. Claudia, a bricklayer's daughter, was studying stenography in the hope that it would help her to escape. She read comics and cheap magazines, for example the weekly *Confidenze*, which has a circulation of nearly half a million. She noticed an advertisement from an employee of ENEL (the electricity authority) who was looking for an 'au pair girl'. Claudia was pleased; she replied, and set off for Avezzano (which is on the railway line, and where the advertiser was to meet her) with her father and two sisters. In fact the electrician wanted a girl he could sleep with as well. He came to some sort of agreement with the father, who then went home with his other daughters. Claudia found herself living on the outskirts of Rome in a slum; but to her it seemed like big city life.

It was 30 January 1976 when she moved flat. On the evening of 30 August, on her way to get the milk, she met one of her future rapists, Nicola Vinciprova, at the Bar Diana. He persuaded her to go with him into a nearby field. Soon afterwards one of the Sciarra brothers arrived on his Vespa. Together with another youth known as 'the Chinaman' they raped her. Claudia returned home battered and covered in bruises. The electrician, a man called Gemma, took her to the police station. But both of them were discouraged from laying charges. ('Think carefully': 'Are you sure?'). Gemma then took her to San Giovanni Hospital where, still in tears, she was visited by the sister of one of the accused. 'Withdraw the charge or we'll kill you.'

Gemma got scared and took her back to her village. Her father then took her on to the hospital in Aquila. But he no longer wanted her at home. She was now considered a whore; she had dishonoured the family. The case reached the newspapers, and at this point the Rome women's movement intervened. They brought Claudia from Aquila to Rome, where they were running a rape centre. For Claudia it was all confusing. She wanted her comics, but the

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feminists gave her difficult books on psychoanalysis instead. When the rape trial took place she cried and contradicted herself. Last month, on 30 March, she and her lawyer took part in a radio broadcast on rape; after which they went their separate ways. There was then a gap of some hours (perhaps Claudia was trying to go back to her boyfriend, Gemma's, house), but the fact is that in the evening she was taken to San Camillo Hospital with serious injuries. Two motorists had found her unconscious on a road near the field where she had first been attacked. Weeping, Claudia told a policeman at the hospital that she had been raped by 20 young men. He laughed. 'Surely there must have been 60?'

The next day 10,000 women demonstrated in Rome. It is the rape capital of Italy: Claudia's case was the twentieth in which the women's movement had been involved in the past 12 months, and the fourth to become overtly political. Probably the most famous was the circus murder in the summer of 1976 when three brazenly fascist youths from the wealthiest part of Rome raped, drugged and then killed a girl from the *Borgata* (shanty town), Rosaria Lopez. They thought they had also killed her friend, Donatella Colasanti – but she had only pretended to lose consciousness. Donatella was taken in the boot of a car, at night, to Ostia where they planned to bury her. But she managed to escape and all three were subsequently given life imprisonment.

The women's movement is trying to prove that the attack on Claudia was a criminal offence: under the law as it stands this would be unprecedented, since rape is a 'private' act. A group of women lawyers have organised in her defence. 'There are 11 of us at the moment,' says Tina Lagostina Bassi, 'and we have decided to form a permanent committee offering advice and legal protection to women who suffer from violence of any kind. There are an estimated 20,000 rapes a year in Italy; but there is also a lot of violence in the home, that is frequently not reported, or reported only after several years have passed. The fear of dishonour is still more important even than the fear of possible revenge.'

The trial of Claudia's attackers turned out to be a series of *coups de théâtre*, and is not over yet. Claudia remains in hospital and has other courtroom ordeals to face. Despite her feminist supporters she is in no way liberated. She is still just an underprivileged girl who in other times would have ended up as a chambermaid or a prostitute.

Rome

Ronald Harker

Food, Energy and the Future

The warning has been trickling down from the doom-watchers for some time now, but largely to the deaf. Slowly but surely mankind is committing suicide. This is happening because the world is unable or unwilling to share the food it produces, and because the sources of energy on which we depend for the production of food are being used up. A world-famous biologist, Professor Paul Ehrlich of Stanford University, California, is lately reported to have reached the belief that it is now 'too late to do anything but observe the cataclysm'.

But he is in a minority of one among 30 eminent scientists, economists and philosophers, who think otherwise. They have been meeting at times during the past year at their headquarters, Bedford College, London University, to ponder the crises of food and energy, and they do not believe that doom is inevitable. They *do* believe that a good deal of dire prophecy is based on an intricate mesh of lies. They believe mankind can save itself if it wants to.

Every one of these 30 – nine of them Nobel laureates – is renowned for his expertise and has a disinterested concern for humanity – but chiefly for generations of humanity none of them will ever see, because most of them are around 70 years of age.

The Group is called the Special Commission on Internal Pollution (SCIP) because when it was founded by the late Sir Julian Huxley, Dr Hugo Theorell, the Swedish Nobel Prizewinner, and Sir Rudolph Peters, the Cambridge biochemist, under the chairmanship of a London surgeon-scientist, Peter Beaconsfield, it was initially anxious to set out the effects of chemicals on biological systems. The group then widened its inquiries, and from its pooled knowledge surprising facts emerged.

The members of the group recognise that as the world's population expands the popular notion that there will soon be not enough means to feed it began as a lie, largely propagated for selfish interests. It is true that a minority of the world's people have more food than they need, and that something like a quarter of the people in the world have not enough. But this is not because the food cannot be found.

First, the facts, verified from their own and other impeccable sources. The world population has recently passed the 4,000 million mark. Only one-tenth of the earth's surface – about 14,000 million acres – is cultivated. But even with the present standards and sub-standards of husbandry this cultivated land can produce enough food to feed twice the world population, giving everybody a satisfactory average daily diet of 2,400 calories and 40 grammes of protein – more than enough for the very young and the old. This is not merely the global capacity to produce; it is a regional capacity too. Only odd bits of the earth's dry skin, like parts of the Sahara Desert, cannot contribute to the people's pantry.

Rates of production are, of course, wildy disparate. John Couston, of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, informed the group that today one Soviet farmer feeds himself and six other people, whereas his American counterpart feeds 46. An African may work five days in the field to produce 100 lbs of grain on which an American farmer spends five minutes. Why then do the well-off countries accept as an unfortunate fact (but then push it out of mind because it is tiresome not to) a claim that up to one half of the people of the world go hungry to bed?

Again, the facts. Statisticians in the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation can show that about one-fifth of growing crops are choked by weeds, and that about one-third of the remainder rots or is eaten by vermin in bad storage places. To give a more homely analysis: we sow enough wheat to make, say, 120 loaves of bread, but 24 of those loaves are never made into bread because the grain is lost to weeds; and 32 out of the remaining possible 96 loaves are never baked because the grain is destroyed by pests or faulty granaries. So we get only 64 loaves instead of 120.

And what happens, figuratively speaking, to the 64 loaves? Well, when this unwasted food does reach the people it reaches mainly the rich minority because the poor majority cannot afford to buy it. This does not mean, however, that only the rich nations can buy it: all grades of malnutrition and hunger can be found in New York and Rome as well as in Dacca and Delhi. Professor R. N. Sharma, a celebrated Lucknow surgeon, told his fellow-members of the group: 'It is a common fallacy to regard countries as a whole as well-fed or not. Those with money eat well wherever they may be, and those who are poor do not. World hunger is almost entirely a question of purchasing power and the social and economic structure of the country that is "short of food".'

And still the waste continues wherever the food arrives. The rich don't eat all the harvest they buy. The wealthy world consumes – consumes, not eats – 160 million metric tons of cereal a year, but it feeds 371 million metric tons to animals. The waste here arises because an animal requires six pounds of grain to produce one pound of edible meat. Of the food which does reach the kitchens of the rich, millions of tons are thrown off the dinner tables and into the garbage cans because they do not suit the palates of those privileged societies. (As a local footnote, the 20,000 tons of food Britain fed to pets in 1954 had grown to 600,000 tons in 1974.)

So much for the lie that the world cannot feed itself if the population grows at the present rate and reaches 6,000 millions by the end of the century. (The U.S. Agriculture Department has announced that it went up by 3.7 per cent in 1976.) Since 1948 the increase in production of wheat has been 50 per cent per person, and the increase in rice production 100 per cent. On the contrary, food production has been increasing faster than the population: there could be not merely just enough food, but enough and to spare. So the food future is bright – or can be bright if enough of this abundance reaches all the people who need it. Why doesn't it?

The problem is formidable in some ways,

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but simple in others. Food does not reach all the needy people because of man's failure to see that his neighbour gets a fair share. Peter Beaconsfield told his group: 'The ills of our time can be summed up in one word: abuse – abuse of power, abuse of money, abuse of privilege, and perhaps worst of all, abuse of our natural resources. Everybody wants everything and wants it at once. . .'

To illustrate the magnitude of man's failure to achieve fair shares, but at the same time the relatively small shift over food distribution that would put it right, the Commission points out that this year's cereal production will be around 1,400 million metric tons, and the extra amount the hungry world needs in order to be well fed is only about another 12 million metric tons – or less than 1 per cent.

Natural Cupidity

So what is the problem? Is it a question of organisation only? Or is the problem subject to the hazard of famine? The Commission suggests that famine simply doesn't happen. Famine is organised. Hoarding and black marketeering when a region has a poor harvest, smuggling, and other anti-social habits of food profiteers are ways of life in every community and in every social and political system. Corruption is rife in small communities in poor countries as in the lobbies of the affluent, whether it is in East or the West. The only difference is who gets the profit. So behind maldistribution, which is ultimately the reason why the world is peopled with both the starving and the over-fed, lies greed.

Man has always looked after himself and his loved ones and after these are satisfied all he wants is profit at the expense of his fellow men. Professor Alfred Kastler, developer of the laser ray and French Nobel prize winner, comments: 'We take cotton from Egypt, but we do not pay a fair price, so the people of Egypt remain poor. We buy peanuts from the African countries – and tea and coffee, cocoa and bananas and minerals; we take copper from Chile. We take phosphates. We do not pay a fair price for all these products. We must change this attitude. It would not be charity but justice.'

In the discussions, in which Britain's Sir Michael Stewart joined, he said: 'I do not know anyone who cannot be bribed by the prospect of quicker advancement. That, I think, is the natural disposition even in countries which attempt to control the natural cupidity of man, like Communist China . . . These things can be corrected, but only by a sense of the imminence of the danger of continuing in that way. It is the only motive that I know of which actually stops people behaving selfishly – when they recognise that the motivation of selfishness or acquisition is going to put what they already have at risk. I think it is the business of teachers and people who handle these matters, like ambassadors, bankers, academics and scientists, to create a permanent awareness – almost a psychosis – of some degree of fear.'

SCIP agrees that mere financial help to the poorer nations has been misguided. Professor Joan Robinson, the Cambridge economist, asked: 'If better terms of trade were obtained for the poorer world, what guarantee could there be that this would be used for the benefit of the mass of the people? It might be used to import armaments.' And Professor Ehrlich commented: 'The evidence is that it would not be used for the betterment of the mass of the people.'

So change is required not only in the richer world. Bangladesh may be burdened with poor and hungry people but it sets up its own costly airline. India has the nightmare of its people dying on the pavements of Calcutta, but has spent enormous sums to explode its own nuclear bomb.

Olof Palme, formerly Prime Minister of Sweden, informed the group that world expenditure on armaments is $300,000 million a year – a sum equal to the total income of those countries where the poorest half of mankind lives. 'About half the world's scientists and technicians,' he said, 'are today engaged in improving existing weapons and developing new ones. This gives rise to doubts about the ability of science to serve humanity and the future. Yet in spite of these criticisms the future is in the hands of the scientists but depends on the decisions of politicians.'

The sad fact is that even the developing countries as a whole have spent more on armaments than they have received in food help. They have also run up debts to the richer world, for they have all wanted to industrialise like the West – and why not? – though funds for all this came by way of loans.

Energy Crisis

The Commission concluded that a completely new attitude and policy is required to increase the purchasing power of poorer peoples, for the lack of this is a greater cause of hunger than all the agricultural excuses put together. Also this is the way to help control the population explosion, because, as Professor Lord Vaizey, head of Brunel University's School of Social Sciences, observed, where income levels rise, birth rates have been shown to fall.

So to the energy crisis, which is inextricably linked with the future of food. Our main sources of energy now are coal, gas and oil. Without energy there would be no food because there would be no fertiliser, no ploughing, no planting, no harvesting, no threshing, no binding, no transporting, no processing, no packaging – nothing. Without energy there would be no warmth, no cooling, no light, no comfort, no entertainment – nothing. We have all these things now because of our dependence on coal, gas and oil. The critical fact here is that the earth's collection of all three is limited and once used can never be replaced: it is gone forever. Man must find substitutes or die of hunger and cold.

How soon will he die if the substitutes are not found? The scientists know. They have measured the totals of current resources. At the rate we are using gas there is enough left for 40 years, but since we are using it more and more its prospective life span is even less. The earth will give up enough oil for 25 to 30 years at the present rate of extraction, but less as dependence on it increases. There is enough coal for between 200 and 300 years at the current rate of use. This last estimate may be comforting, but by the time our children are middle-aged we shall have run out of both gas and oil, and will be using up the coal faster than ever.

Search for Substitutes

All these are hard facts. They come, like those about food, from the world's most reliable sources – the United Nations agencies, the US Bureau of Mines, and the independent research of the scientists themselves. What can we, the people, do about it? For as Sir George Porter, Nobel laureate and head of the Royal Institution, warned the group; 'In a democratic country all the people must decide, but they should decide on the advice of the expert as far as expert questions are concerned, for there is no other advice.'

What then are the remedies the scientists propose to stave off disaster? In physical terms the answers are fairly simple. First and simplest, the world ought to exploit the everlasting resources of sun, wind and water. Is it doing it? Well, early this year Britain's Department of Energy announced, as if to a rousing roll of drums, that it was going to risk £3.6 million to help get some good solar heaters on the market. The Americans are doing a bit better, but in 1975 they spent more on advertising deodorants than on research into solar energy. Workers on geothermal energy were allocated to spend only as much as went to build five fighter aircraft. And yet heat from inside the earth can be harnessed for human use and is inexhaustible. Even if we return to a predominantly coal economy the search for substitutes must be pressed and pressed now if we care anything at all about the people who will inhabit the earth when we are no longer here. Professor Dennis Gabor, Nobel prize-winning physicist, told the group: 'Whatever the difficulties of finding alternative energy supplies are, it is essential that we keep on searching for solutions, for if solutions are not found before the century is out, our children will kill each other fighting for the dwindling resources that their forefathers failed to augment.'

The substitutes are, however, on the threshold of our time. They are nuclear fission and nuclear fusion.

Nuclear fission we already have. The main and – to the public – most worrying aspect is how to get rid of deadly radioactive waste from its production. The people have been told that its killing potential may last for thousands of years wherever it is dumped. So a problem is how to ensure that production of energy from nuclear fission is safe from accident or sabotage.

Edward Teller, who shudders over the title of 'Father of the H-bomb' with which he has been burdened, said that a possible answer to why there is powerful public reaction against nuclear reactors is that grown-ups, like children, like to be frightened. 'We are frightened particularly easily,' he told the group, 'by what we do not understand. The nuclear reactors occupy a special position: they are based on a remote portion of physics; they have been

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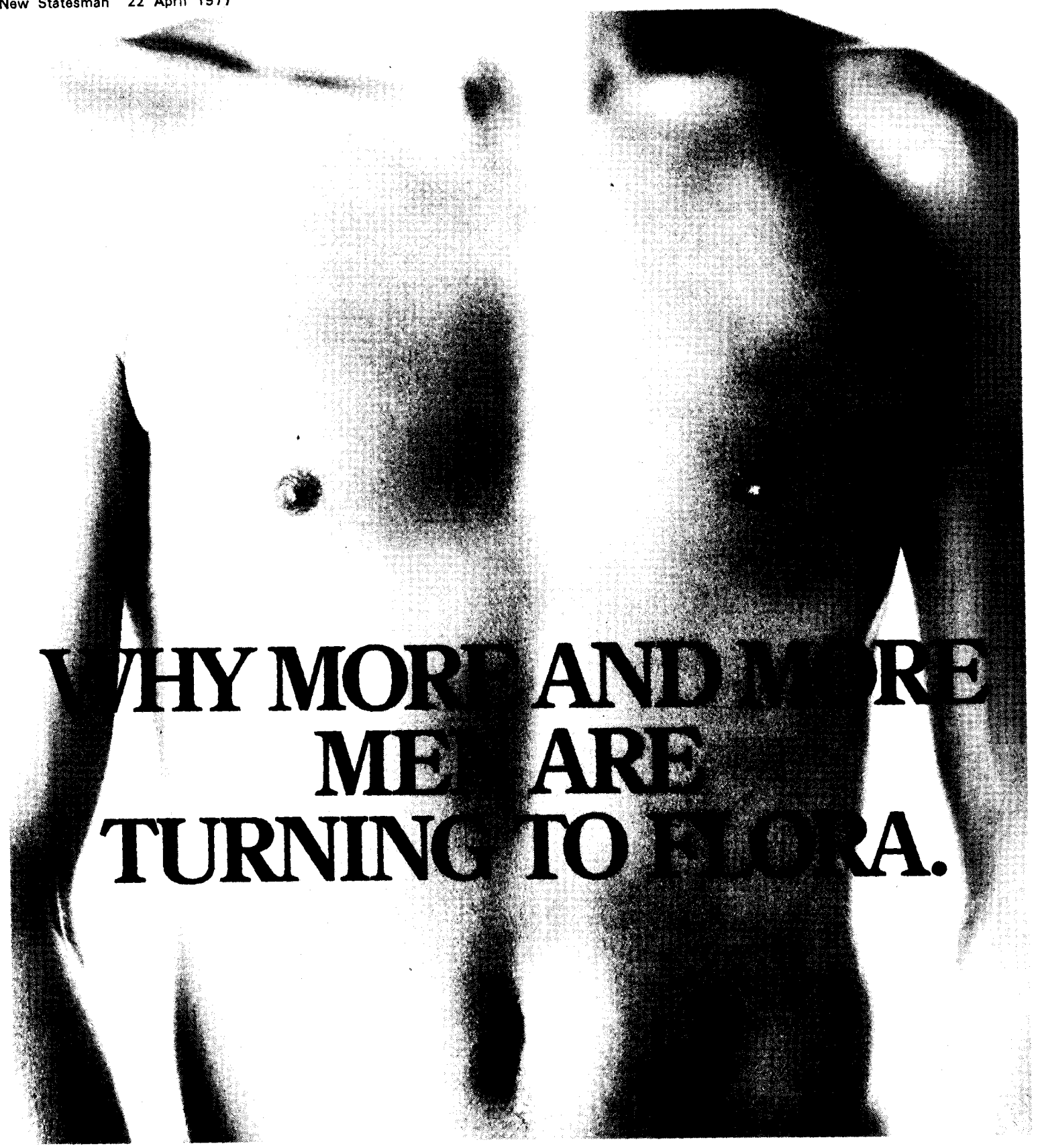

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developed by strictly secret research in war-time and the whole subject surfaced only in connection with the two bombs on Japan which killed more than 100,000 people. I believe this was a terrible mistake, that we should have demonstrated nuclear power rather than used it. If we could have finished the war with a mere demonstration – and I do not know whether that would have worked – I believe we would not now be worried about nuclear reactors, which of course are quite different from nuclear explosives. The chain reaction in a reactor is quite different from that in a bomb. A nuclear explosion is impossible in a nuclear power reactor. With this background in people's minds their predisposition to become frightened, to see doomsday approaching, is much greater than with other unusual new instruments.'

But beckoning man beyond fission and its dependence on the earth's known and finite store of uranium is the far more desirable nuclear fusion. It has no dangerous by-products or deadly waste, but so far the difficulties of controlling it have proved to be intractable. In practice the problem of fusion may sound simple to the layman – it is the conversion of hydrogen into helium – but the difficulty lies in creating extremely high temperatures and pressure long enough for fusion to take place and the energy thus released controlled.

The SCIP group agreed that we are not trying hard enough to solve the problem, for if and when it is solved, the prize is world salvation – man's source of energy secured forever. How are we not trying hard enough? Because by the end of the century the United States alone will have thrown an estimated $300,000m. into what amounts to a panic short-term search for new sources of oil, while only a fraction of this amount of money is being used by the whole world to try to solve the problems holding up the limitless bounty of nuclear fusion.

So to sum up, the world is in a crisis over food and energy, a situation far more threatening than any world war that can be imagined. This the 30 wise men concede, but they believe the crisis can be overcome, that mankind can still save itself.

Governments are obsessed with the preservation of their own power through the next elections – or the next coercion masked as an election. In turn their members are obsessed with the aim of retaining their seats at those elections. Most governments last only five years, most national presidents only four years. As Peter Beaconsfield put it: 'Our problems stem largely from the fact that a politician's life is only about five years – so he'll spend the first learning his way about, and the fifth collecting votes for re-election . . . Similarly the industrial manager's concern is for this year's sales charts, not for a ten-year projection. How can we expect either of these groups to invest vast sums and expertise in programmes which cannot show positive and life-saving results in their own life-time?'

Professor T. A. Lambo, deputy director-general of the World Health Organisation asked 'whether the Western political institutions, the economic imperatives, and the moral institutions which are being prostituted and exported to the so-called developing countries are not themselves bankrupt and obsolete . . . A great many revolutions are bound to take place in the developing countries, but we feel strongly that unless similar revolutions take place in the developed countries it will not mean anything at all.'

The conclusion reached by what may turn out to have been historic gatherings at London University is that unless governments accept the advice of scientists as well as economists and philosophers, and cooperate with them, no significant advance can be made and man's creeping suicide will at best be postponed a little while. And so the final problem must be: what will make them collaborate?

The answer is that only an informed and alarmed people can do it. Sir Karl Popper, the British philosopher, said: 'Nobody can predict the future. There is too much propaganda and not enough information, at least on the important issues. There should be open forums in a free society – groups of people with special knowledge to discuss the real issues of public policy. Most men, if given sufficient information, will bear the strain of civilisation and manage the problems that face us, through free institutions.' Peter Beaconsfield said: 'It is not subversive to stimulate people into thinking about their society, for at the end of the day it is the citizen who will decide what kind of life he wants. Even in totalitarian states it is difficult for the rulers to advance very far if the entire force of public opinion is against them . . .'

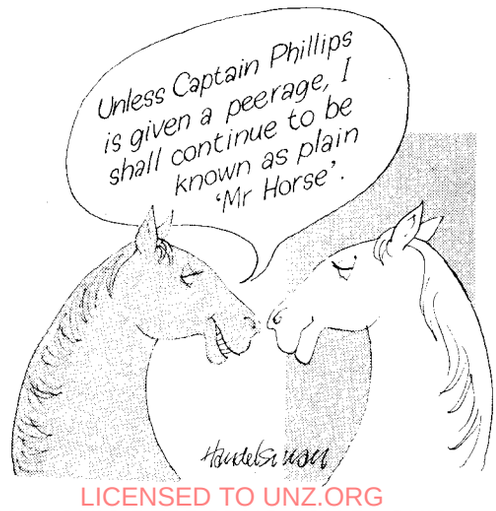
So the future lies in the hands of the people themselves. An informed and alarmed public can put pressure on its Members of Parliament. Pressured members of parliament can put pressure on their governments. Governments in turn can seek a consortium for salvation if they can persuade other governments that the threat to survival is universal. Hence, as the wise men at London University concluded, the critical operation is first to convince the people that what they, the experts, have discovered is true, that their advice must be accepted, and that the politicians must have the vision to implement it if mankind is to fend off its own demise. For never in human history has there been stronger supporting evidence for the biblical warning that where there is no vision the people perish.

Donald Gould

A Gentle Frankenstein

The amazing Dr White is still at it, as he reminded us all the other day on BBC radio when he blandly acknowledged his interest in the possibility of transplanting a human head. This may sound like the centre of a suitable plot for a Hammer Film Productions epic, to be added to their list, alongside *Son of Frankenstein, The Bride of Dracula,* and similar innocent fancies. Not a bit of it, for Dr R. J. White is no hack script writer, nor does he produce scenarios for Sci-Fi comic strips; he is a scientist and surgeon heading a costly team of research workers on the staff of the Metropolitan Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio.

For a good 15 years or more now Dr White has made what is, presumably, an at least adequate living by carrying out experiments on monkeys. He began by taking the brains out of monkeys and keeping them 'alive' by transfusing their blood vessels. He judged that these disembodied brains were, indeed, alive because he was able to record their continuing electrical activity. He was able to pick up from the surface of his preparations, or specimens (no longer labelled or thought of as if they were the seat of thought and feeling and activity in a free-ranging creature, you notice) the 'brainwaves' produced by nerve impulses running around the cerebral circuits.



This bold experimenter was able to keep an isolated monkey brain functioning in some sort of fashion for up to 12 hours before the wondrous web of cells, which he had torn out of the body which sustained it, finally perished. But why do it? What in God's name is the point of demonstrating that a monkey's brain can be kept alive for several hours after the rest of the creature to which it belonged has been destroyed?

I suspect that Dr White was largely motivated by the considerations which moved Dr Christiaan Barnard to perform the first human heart transplant; that he was not so much convinced of the true value of his experiments, as excited by the prospect of achieving a 'first' in his field. He did attempt to justify his early experiments by arguing that his isolated brain preparations provided a means for making a precise assessment of the chemical activity going on inside them. He explained that he could analyse the composition of the

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blood going in, and compare it with that of the blood coming out, and that any difference must be due to something happening inside the brain itself, for, of course, all other tissues had been taken away.

He has had to abandon that excuse. In the first place his early experiments have not, so far as I am aware, increased by even the smallest measure our understanding of the chemistry of the brain. Secondly, he soon went over to transplanting monkey heads on to monkey bodies – an exercise which abnegated altogether any claim that the work was designed to advance the study of brain biochemistry.

But the change in technique did illuminate one aspect of his work. I had the grisly task of interviewing Dr White for BBC's *Horizon* programme, ten years or more ago, when he was still at the stage of keeping naked brains alive for a few brief hours. I asked him whether his 'preparations' sustained the mysterious faculty of consciousness, and if so whether or not they experienced pain, fear, frustration, anger, dread, or any of the other sensations and emotions which are the result of brain activity.

He was unable to say, since an isolated brain can't scream or weep or struggle. Moreover (and this was the most frightening aspect of our cosy studio chat) he didn't seem to think it mattered. This gently spoken, well-groomed, prosperous-looking, quiet American seemed totally unperturbed by the suggestion that his work might be the cause of a nightmarish kind of anguish beyond ordinary experience. *If* his isolated monkey brains were functioning in anything like a normal fashion, then they were still receptacles of consciousness, and they must have suffered the kind of terror that accompanies those dreams in which we find ourselves paralysed or leaden-footed while pursued by assassins. But if they were *not* functioning in a normal fashion, then his experiments were pointless.

But when he went into the business of transplanting entire heads, he found, not unsurprisingly, that a transplanted brain, enclosed in its head, does indeed retain the faculty of consciousness. He has two ways of going about it. He either beheads a monkey and connects another monkey's head to the severed blood vessels in the neck of the first (which really amounts to using one monkey as a relatively cheap and efficient heart/lung machine to service the head of the other). Alternatively he keeps the first monkey intact, and grafts the head of a second monkey onto its neck – again using monkey number one as the source of oxygenated blood to the head of monkey number two.

He has found (and who would have imagined otherwise?) that, once recovered from the operation, the heads of both animals behave in a 'characteristic' fashion. They can taste, smell, see, hear, call out, and they remain 'basically pugnacious in their attitudes, as demonstrated by their biting if orally stimulated'. Such obscene chimeras have survived for up to a week.

It is said that a team of 18 doctors are employed in managing each of these head transplants. These doctors are served by an appropriate number of technicians and other helpers, so perhaps one of Dr White's experiments absorbs the same resources of skill and time and money as a human heart transplant – but to what end?

After a professional lifetime's effort in this field, the best Dr White seems to be able to offer is the prospect of perfecting his techniques to the extent that it could be applied to humans. But he wouldn't call it a head transplant. He'd rather call it a body transplant. In other words, you don't think in terms of using somebody's cast-off head to keep another person's body working. You think of the adventure as a way of using some poor prole's body as a living machine for keeping a superior kind of head in business after its own natural carcass has flunked out.

He doesn't say how the heads to be given an extra brief existence in this fashion might be chosen. He does admit that the surviving head would be sewn on to a paralysed, incontinent hunk of flesh which it could by no means control or use, except as a supply of blood. But he points out that quadriplegics are like that anyhow. Quadriplegics are people who have been paralysed from the neck down because their spinal cords have been severed high up by some accident or event.

It seems strange that so much skill and effort should be devoted to the task of reproducing, by artificial means, one of the most wretched of human conditions.

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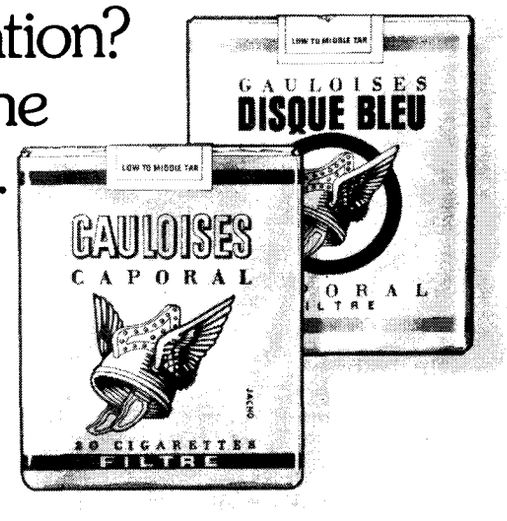

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Household Faces-4 Russell Harty

Mother's Pride

Commercial television in Britain does not have star interviewers like Johnny Carson or Dick Cavett any more than it has newsreaders with wheelbarrow salaries like Barbara Walters. The guest is the main thing on chat-shows (and hard news gets a look in during the bulletins as well). So when a small boy rushed up as Russell Harty was leaving the studio with Johnny Weismuller, and asked breathlessly which of them was Tarzan, Harty had to reply 'Him Tarzan, Me Jane'.

A lot of his best lines are off the air and off the cuff. Friends and colleagues (his team all like him a lot, which is more than you can say for many host-presenters) are always slightly defensive about this. They know, and Russell Harty knows, that there is something about him on the screen which makes viewers want him to take a tumble. This inexplicable anti-quality (Roy Hattersley has it in politics) was demonstrated forcefully a couple of years back. Nigel Dempster asked his *Daily Mail* readers to nominate a victim for his custard pie hitman. The smart money was all on Tony Benn as the customers' pet abomination. But the genial Russell received a landslide win – and didn't care for it. Nor did he care for the snipings of Richard Afton, the *Evening News* TV critic, whose leaden efforts at irony used to be kept from Harty by his staff. 'You can't fool me,' would echo down the corridors, 'I know it hasn't been lost. It's that Richard Afton again isn't it?'

This slightly chaotic, slightly camp style ought to translate well into telly, and his ratings are consistently good for London Weekend. He can't seem to get networked, and can't seem to find out why not either, though dark rumours abound of deadly rivalry and jealousy. Friends say that he isn't really liked for the right reasons. They point out with some justice that he won an Emmy for a film on Salvador Dali, that he won the RTE Golden Harp on another occasion, and that he had a fine record as a Third Programme producer. It comes as a surprise to the people who only know Friday night's toothsome Muppet saying 'Welcome once again'. From a company whose chairman, John Freeman, once presented *Face to Face*, it is all rather bland fare. But Harty reminds people that he did do a stint of serious interviews – *Russell Harty Plus One* – which went out late at night, featured ideal foils like James Cameron, ran to an hour in length, were great to do and bombed in the ratings.

For somebody who was best pals with Alan Bennett at Oxford, it took him some time to reach the popular eminence, leave aside the humorous reputation, which he now enjoys. Born in Blackburn, the son of a stall-holder in the market, he got scholarships all the way but showed little sign of ambition and spent several years as a teacher (many of them in a public school) before going to teach at New York University. Although he adored, and adores, America, he returned home to work for the BBC and subsequently Humphrey Burton's *Aquarius*. London Weekend needed a rival for the popular Michael Parkinson – this comparison is not Harty's favourite – and his wit and popularity stood him in good stead.

Having to ask questions as if you didn't know the answers (or hadn't got them on your clipboard) can make you look a shade thick or naïve, and if it's unfair that this happens to Russell Harty it's because he often doesn't have enough of a 'thinkette' about his interrogations. So there are bad moments, like the ones provided by the drink-sodden Rita Hayworth or the too-smooth Patrick Lichfield. There are also moments of delight, such as David Bowie's 'Course not, *silly*'. And nobody has ever accused Harty of being pompous or defensive if he does drop himself in it – middle-aged ladies write in quite a lot and ask if they can mother/marry him. He probably doesn't need that kind of protection.

Quite what sort of company he *does* go for is unclear, and he'll never shake the rumour that he's one of the boys. It's inevitable in the world of television light entertainment, where the proportion does seem to be rather higher than the Wolfenden average, but it would be boring for him to 'come out' if it was true, and self-righteous to deny it if it wasn't. Bravo, anyway, that he's done neither.

There's still a definite privacy about the man. He enjoys company, even flourishes in it, but is not the sort who can't bear to be left alone. His basement flat will often be his only friend for an evening of telly or magazines. Nor does he neglect his native Blackburn or his proud mum. Rather the reverse in fact – he is a loyal visitor to the town and an admirer of its present MP, Barbara Castle, who keeps trying to get him active in combating racialism in that

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troubled and nervous borough. He's game, and keen, but hasn't yet found quite the right format. Another thinkette will be needed before anyone gets him on a platform of any kind.

As somebody who is legendary for his obsession with cleanliness and tidiness, Russell Harty has an instinct for things that are out of place or, conversely, super-congruent. His best documentaries have a fine eye for grotesquerie and eccentricity, which he manages to mock and magnify without any Diane Arbus-like emphasis on cruelty. Freaks are fine if you can show their context. There's a dash of *schmaltz* in this approach, and many an 'ugh' to be won if you're not the kind of viewer who likes 'sincere' and 'understanding' presentations. But who can grudge a jolly idea like Harty's discovery that William Walton and Gracie Fields lived on adjacent islands (Ischia and Capri) having been born in adjacent Lancashire towns within a few months of each other? It isn't regarded as his finest hour, that film, but he earned points for trying.

Why doesn't he ever get tough with his guests or subjects? In our time, the chance to invite public property on the screen is such a privilege, such an automatic passport to everything that dreams are made of, that to make it bland (however furry and witty) seems a tremendous cop-out. Yet something in his format or his aproach makes Harty the man who understands all and forgives all. There is no obvious mean streak, no tang of vitriol in his questions; odd in a man who admires Gore Vidal.

Even now, he is planning a Granada series (his first with a continuous studio audience) which will deal with aspects of what is loosely known as 'behaviour'. Clothes, mannerisms, affectations, social tactics, will all come under examination with a panel of experts and a group of invitees who will be constant through the weeks. No doubt the thing will be educational and entertaining, but it is easier to imagine him remarking 'how interesting', say, than 'how calculatingly vile and manipulative'.

Alan Bennett has a private fantasy sketch about Harty twiddling little bits of string and muttering to himself in the day-room of an eventide home, while gibbering oldies whisper to one another 'He's the one who thinks he used to be on telly.' Peter Finch's oversung performance in *Network* depicts the perfectly beastly things that can happen to someone asking, and answering for themselves, the question 'what is this man *for*?'. Studio stars are usually defended by the friends, admirers and toadies either for being utterly super on and off screen or for being secretly 'curled up with Spinoza's latest' and made to earn a living by stooping to the great heights of commercial and social success.

Harty is one of those who denies that he is an intellectual *manqué*, and insists that he just wants to have fun and share it. It's hard to believe such an unassuming explanation, even when accompanied by an apparently genuine enjoyment of visits to locations (like Glenfinnan for the Highland Games) where the beam is weak and the public have never heard of him. True, he got into interviewing largely by accident. True, the 'semiology of television as a means of communication in this complex day and age' leaves him cold or lukewarm. But one of the great pitfalls of the game and for those in it is the belief that there is nothing worse than being boring. Russell Harty is terrified of being thought a bore – and thus, perhaps, unwilling to risk enterprises that might be thought heavy.

As his friend Cyril Bennett found out, there is more than one way that television can pressure a personality. It can squeeze his ratings and his confidence which, without being unkind, could be said of Cyril Bennett. It can massage and flatter the ego, which can be said of many producers and front-men currently displaying their signed photos of Elton John or Faye Dunaway. And it can make you excel at the thing you are second-best at – which might be the case with Russell Harty. What he needs to do is find a show, and a presentation, (and a company) that leans on his muscles a bit more. He once said that he took plunges in interviews because 'it's not much fun playing tennis by yourself'. He alleges that he hates the 'oomph' of showbiz; the unlooked-for street encounters and restaurant greetings. Good. He should develop a proper new film and telly persona before he starts to like the meretricious stuff. Bernard Shaw remarked about popular culture that if people didn't get what they liked they might start, appallingly, to like what they got. Russell Harty needs a new deal, and if it turns out to be a square one, that would be better for all concerned.

Chris Mullin

Island Story

One of the last acts of the Conservative Government which fell in February 1974 was to give the Americans permission to build what was described as a $35m. 'communications station' on the remote British-owned island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. At the time the decision provoked strong protests from the Labour benches in the House of Commons and when Labour took office a few weeks later the decision was placed on ice to await the outcome of the Defence Review. Eventually the Americans got the go-ahead to build what the then Defence Secretary, Mr Roy Mason, described (*Hansard*, 22 July 1975) as 'an austere communications facility – not a base'.

From the start it was clear that all was not well. The British Government had insisted the island was uninhabited until the *Guardian* revealed that, in fact, a thousand third- or fourth-generation citizens of Diego Garcia had been evicted prior to the American arrival. Then the costs began to escalate, first to $60m. then to more than $100m. Finally, American congressional committees began to unearth plans for aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, possibly even the dreaded B-52 bombers. Throughout all this the Foreign Office, in the person of Mr David Ennals, and the Ministry of Defence, in the person of Mr Roy Mason, stuck firmly to their original story. Diego Garcia was to be 'an austere communication facility'; any information to the contrary was 'misleading'.

Earlier this month a group of American and British correspondents were taken on a five-hour tour of the island. They were the first journalists ever to visit Diego Garcia and this, according to David Andelman of the *New York Times*, is what they saw:

> An 8,000-foot runway has been installed, fuel storage tanks have been built and satellite and communications systems are already in operation. There is a sprawling deep-water anchorage capable of handling the giant aircraft carriers that will soon begin docking and re-supplying themselves for their patrols in the Indian Ocean . . . it is clear that there is much more to come. Earth-moving equipment is operating 20 hours a day. Construction crews are filling in swamps and clearing coral for a 4,000-foot extension to the runway and expanding the parking area for military jets that arrive and depart daily . . . other naval construction crews are laying the foundations of the huge oil-tank farm that will store the 640,000 barrels of jet fuel for the planes and ships of the naval task groups that are expected to begin calling here regularly within two years.

Total cost will be about $173m., or five times what the House of Commons was told originally (*Hansard*, 5 February 1974).

The importance of what is going on in the Indian Ocean should not be underestimated. Around the Ocean's shores are many of the world's poorest and most unstable countries: India, Bangladesh, Iran, Rhodesia, South Africa, Indonesia, not to mention the Arabian Gulf where most of the non-communist world's oil comes from. For the first time Diego Garcia brings all these countries within comfortable intervention range of the American war machine.

Diego Garcia also slots perfectly into the American military's new post-Vietnam 'global strategy' which involves utilising a series of island bases around the world which provide refuelling and maintenance facilities for bomber-planes, actually based on the American mainland to carry out strikes on any continent, be refuelled in the air, and return to base without ever touching down. The beauty of using remote staging posts is that there is unlikely to be interference from a hostile local population, snooping journalists or Congressmen.

Diego Garcia is the last link in a chain of island bases stretching from Johnson Island and Guam in the Pacific which enable American warplanes to strike targets in Asia from the Soviet Union's Kamchatka Peninsula (north of Japan) to the Indian sub-continent. The US Air Force chief of staff, General David Jones, two years ago described global mobility as 'a quiet, dimly perceived revolution in airpower'.

It may only have been dimly perceived as far as the British Government were concerned (though, on the other hand, they may just have been lying), but many people – both here and in America – have been well able to guess what was going on since the day Diego Garcia was first publicly discussed. This month's little press junket only confirms the worst.

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London Diary

☐ The Heathrow strike leaders have by now been ritualistically denounced as grasping, devious, irresponsible and all the rest of it. Even Reg Birch, wearing his Engineering Union hat rather than his Mao Tse-tung cap, considers that they aren't playing by the rules. Perhaps he considers them 'Left in appearance but Right in essence', a favourite Chinese formula of excommunication. The principle I go by is that when a strike is unofficial – in other words, there's no strike pay – it must spring from real grievances and have real support. Meanwhile, what about the devious, irresponsible and moreover ham-handed management of British Airways? Twice they have managed, by a resort to 'toughness' and bluster, to give the strike a new lease of life when it might have been settled – first by the dismissal notices, which had to be withdrawn, and then by the charges of Trotskyite conspiracy, which don't stand serious examination. The responsibility belongs to Sir Frank MacFadzean, chairman of British Airways, and the aftermath of the dispute ought to be his summary dismissal. I'm dreaming, of course.

☐ Three untimely deaths in little more than a year – Brian O'Malley, Tony Crosland, and now Sir Peter Kirk – have naturally evoked cries of concern about overwork and stress. I'm not convinced that politicians are subjected to greater strain, or collapse in proportionally greater numbers, than actors, advertising copywriters or teachers, to name a few. But Sir Peter's fate ought to put paid to the notion that anyone can rationally be a member of both the Westminster and the Strasbourg Parliaments. Weirdly, the Government is still toying with the 'compulsory dual mandate' – a system providing that Strasbourg MPs not only may be, but must be, Westminster MPs too. This is supposed to be a neat way of letting foreigners know that Europe doesn't really matter, and that any concern with it can be fitted in as a spare-time activity. ('Hobbies: chess, gardening, Europe.') We'd be far better engaged in drawing up a list of Strasbourg candidates qualified by their internationalism and special knowledge, and prepared to take the job seriously.

☐ If you want to stir up a really furious argument among your friends you should raise the subject of the imprisonment of Rudolf Hess. Some people feel passionately that to keep this sick, worn-out old man penned up – and in solitary confinement, to which he was never sentenced – is an obscenity. Others feel with equal passion that to relent toward one of the top Nazis is to condone the obscenity of Nazism and betray its millions of victims. This is the Russian view, I imagine; I don't believe they are concerned merely with that symbolic presence in West Berlin. Certainly the Western governments are behaving in a manner one can't respect. If they really think that Hess should be released, let them release him when they are in charge of Spandau – what are the Russians actually going to do about it? I think myself that by continuing to make Hess suffer, the victorious powers of the last war are taking a revenge on Hitler, Goering and Goebbels, who are beyond their power. Not that this is necessarily contemptible; we should, as long as possible, maintain the memory of Nazism as a real evil, not a macabre and vaguely ludicrous fantasy like the reign of Caligula. Incidentally, Wednesday of this week was Hitler's birthday. If he is still alive, as some people believe, he is 88.

☐ Reviews of Lady Mosley's autobiography (I don't think I'll read the book) remind me that the best portrait of her husband is in Aldous Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point*. Everard Webley is military in bearing, fluent in speech, attractive to women, autocratic and impatient by temperament. He leads his 'British Freemen' in well-organised marches, preaches a standard form of fascist doctrine, and tells another character: 'I was five years in Parliament. Long enough to convince myself that there's nothing to be done in these days by parliamentarism.' Yet the novel was published in 1928, years before Mosley became a fascist. An uncanny piece of literary precognition.

☐ This is a bit uncanny too. In 1930 Virginia Woolf wrote an introduction to a book called *Life As We Have Known It*, a collection of brief memoirs by working-class women. Now reprinted by that enterprising feminist publishing house, Virago, the book itself is rich in historical interest. But I was riveted by the first sentence of the introduction (it takes the form of a letter to Margaret Llewellyn Davies) which runs: 'When you asked me to write a preface to a book which you had collected of papers by working women I replied that I would be drowned rather than write a preface to any book whatsoever.' The normal phrasing, surely, would be: 'I would rather die than . . .' Even when her unconscious was in charge, Virginia Woolf was a writer of great precision.

☐ That brings me to King Henry I, who never smiled again after his son was drowned at sea. This affecting story crops up in an article in the *New York Review of Books*; it's dragged in without much relevance, I must say, since the subject is pessimism in modern Italian literature. Henry I, however, has turned into King Stephen. The author of the article is Stephen Spender.

☐ When travelling as a journalist I've generally been on my own, but I have a limited experience of going round with a group of colleagues. That's what journalists do, of course, when they follow a political figure, as in the case of Mrs Thatcher's visit to China. Much of the time is spent in attending official functions and listening to speeches; some in coping with bureaucrats and waiting in cable offices; a fair amount, you won't be amazed to hear, in the hotel bar. Bold indeed, therefore, was David Bonavia's account in *The Times* of what people are like these days in Peking and Shanghai. 'In Peking they seem somewhat dazed, even apathetic.' Contrast Shanghai where 'the people are relaxed, grinning and waving at foreigners'. Ah, those unscrutable grins of the Orient! Mind you, it could be that Peking had just lost 10-0 to Shanghai.

☐ I never understood how Labrador could have been the breeding-place of black, smooth-coated dogs. Now, of course, it's all clear to me. Our Labrador had the name of Toby when sold through the inhuman medium of an advertisement in the NS. His home was in Hampstead, a ruthless enough part of the plantation territory under its veneer of culture. His nobility of character and independent spirit – you have to call him repeatedly before he obeys – are manifest. He doesn't yet respond to being addressed as Kunta Kinte, but we're hopeful.

☐ Seriously though, the fantastic success of *Roots* is easy to explain. People, and for obvious historical reasons Americans in particular, have an urge to trace their origins. The dubious *griot* of Juffure is only the black counterpart of many a plausible Scot, leading an innocent American to a cove in Wester Ross and declaiming: 'Aye, 'tis weel kent that Robbie MacConnochie sailed from here in 1767.' My own family history is one of aborted emigration. It seems that an ancestor set out to get a share of the pickings when gold was discovered in Australia in 1851. The ship on which he embarked, sailing from Swansea, was wrecked on the Irish coast – you may think that's a fanciful detour even for a Welsh navigator, but it's what they say in the family – and he decided to come home. But for that gale I might be writing the Sydney Diary.

Mervyn Jones

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Spelling tests in English and French are to be demanded in Parliament for officials responsible for British passports. The current passport contains a non-existent French word and the visitor's passport misspells 'Gibraltar.' When an MP queried it with the Passport Office, he was told: 'Oh really, have we? We spelt Sweden wrong in the last issue.' – *Daily Telegraph* (G. Moger)

☐ Sir William Bagnall, a judge well known for his wide knowledge of property and trust law, left £96,837 gross, net nil, according to his will published yesterday. His widow said: 'This is not surprising – he was a tax expert and very astute.' She declined to elaborate. – *Sunday Times* (J. Soames)

☐ Oil-rich student prince Mohammed Bin Zaid, 17, has been given a black mark for playing truant. The Torbay School of English in Devon has sent a letter of complaint to his father, the Sultan of Abu Dhabi. – *Daily Express* (M. Boom)

☐ Committee chairman Peter Janes brought the relevant facts home when he produced the figures for recent films. Five days of *Emmanuelle II* showed a profit of £86 – but just two days of *Disney's True Life Adventures* cost the cinema £94. – *Bucks Free Press* (Sydney Urry)

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University Forum

Francis Wheen*

Thatcher's Children

'Just think, in about 40 years' time these people will be running the country,' mused an observer at the annual conference of the Federation of Conservative Students. 'Frightening, isn't it?' At first I was inclined to agree with him. The conference, held just before Easter, came as a considerable shock to me. I had spent the previous week at the National Union of Students' conference in Blackpool, where Conservative candidates for the executive had made stirring speeches on racism, education cuts and the like, in the hope that people would realise how jolly left-wing these Tory students are; I was thus rather surprised when I attended the FCS conference at Egham, Surrey. What had happened to the 'lefter-than-thou' speeches of Blackpool? Sunk without trace. Where were those Tories who had, only the previous week, spoken out against racism? They were there all right, but now they were joining in the cheers at every mention of the name of Andrew Mackay, the Stechford victor (whose campaign slogan was, you will remember, 'Stop Immigration').

Of course, many of the delegates at Egham had not attended the Blackpool conference and, had they done so, would have disapproved heartily of the 'left-wing' antics of the Tories who did attend. While everyone in FCS believes that the NUS is unrepresentative since it is run by Marxists, the Federation is fairly evenly divided over how they would remedy this. Those Tories who like to think of themselves as 'moderate' believe that FCS must play an active role in the NUS and, through infiltration of important committees, move towards an eventual takeover of the union; the Right take the view that the Tories should have nothing to do with the NUS. The newly elected chairman of FCS, David Wilks, is a leading member of the 'infiltrate and participate school of thought – he stood for deputy president of NUS in Blackpool and is a member of NUS's Universities' Committee – in contrast to the retiring FCS chairman, Mike Forsyth, who never had much enthusiasm for the National Union.

Yet even those Tories who did go to Blackpool seemed to have shifted several yards to the Right by the time they reached Egham. It occurred to me that the Conservative students are like an alcoholic who gives the impression in public of having turned over a new leaf – 'just a lemonade for me, old man' – but finds that he can't resist the temptation to have a nip or two in the privacy of his home, where no one will see. It must be quite a strain keeping up the pretence of being a leftie for extended periods and it is with a sigh of relief, no doubt, that they all sink back into their cosy Conservatism in the privacy of their own conference.

Thinking about alcoholics led me to the bar, where I was accosted by a delegate from the North, who was wearing a dinner jacket which had white candle-wax spilt on it. He had just had an argument about blood sports and was clearly rather riled: 'I kept telling the chap that fox-hunting, hare-coursing and what have you are the most humane ways of dealing with these pests, but he refused to believe me. I ought to know, dammit, considering I hunt regularly and also my father's a farmer – a gentleman farmer of course.' When he had calmed down I asked for his view on various issues, as he had told me that he was considered a 'bit of a pinko' by the other Conservatives. What did he think of the liberation movements in Southern Africa, for instance? 'Well I'm a Christian and a pacifist, so I abhor anything that involves violence or bloodshed.' Remembering his earlier remarks about blood sports I made my excuses and left.

At this point I began wondering whether I was the victim of an elaborate practical joke, a belated April Fool perhaps. My lapel badge had PRESS clearly printed on it, which should have put them on their guard, yet most delegates seemed to take a positive delight in making fools of themselves in my presence, like the delegate from Hull who told me: 'I have only two ambitions in life, you know: to be an MP by the time I'm 30 and a millionaire by the time I'm 35.' Most delegates looked like parodies of the popular image of Conservative students, with short, neatly coiffed hair and badly fitting suits the order of the day. I began to wonder if they actually enjoyed receiving adverse publicity when I noticed an FCS pamphlet entitled *Press and Publicity*. From a section on 'Working With The Press' I learned: Your local newspaper is Tory and will print a good proportion of the things you offer it. Use every possible occasion to sidle up to editors and reporters. Telephone your local papers whenever your student union or college lefties need to be zapped (once a week on average)'. On student newspapers it said: 'Use your Association meetings to pass ludicrously extreme motions. The student press will then take great pleasure in attacking you. This is just what you want.'

So that was it! The Conservative students actually wanted a bad press! That helped to explain their extraordinary behaviour; for in terms of this conference Margaret Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph came to seem quite moderate. In her speech to the conference on the first day Mrs Thatcher emphasised the last Tory Government's 'excellent record in the social services': it was Conservatives who introduced the £10 Christmas bonus for pensioners, the Family Income Supplement, the Invalidity Allowance and so on. Sir Keith took up the theme in his speech the following afternoon: 'I am appalled by the number of people I see looking through litter bins for a crust of bread or a bit of sandwich,' he told us, as many delegates wept openly. He had also been appalled by the poverty and unemployment he had seen in the 1930s (I found this a bit odd, as the young Joseph spent most of the 1930s at Harrow and Magdalen, Oxford). 'I went into politics out of a concern for welfare.'

On the conference floor itself there was little evidence of such concern. Immediately before Sir Keith's speech the conference had debated a motion calling for the legalisation of cannabis (not just decriminalisation but actual legalisation – no delegate seemed aware of the difference), the legalisation of homosexuality in Scotland and Northern Ireland and a woman's right to abortion within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy (an improvement on previous FCS policy on women, which recommended they should be 'chained to the kitchen sink'). Although the motion was passed (to everyone's surprise), the debate was notable chiefly for the vehemence of those who opposed the motion. 'This is a Christian country, Mr Chairman, and it must be the duty of the state to uphold Christian virtues and morality. This motion is a licence for unrestricted wholesale murder by the womb-scrapers of Harley Street, mass perversion and immorality.' Thus the contribution of a Glasgow delegate who rapidly became the darling of the Monday Club, and whose speech in the devolution debate began: 'No one has a higher opinion of Michael Foot than I have. I think the man's a fool.' The Northern Ireland debate was conducted at a similar level. The seconder of the motion (which was passed) calling for much tougher security measures and wider use of the SAS in the province said: 'We must show terrorists the iron fist. We must put them in prison and *let them rot*!' (thunderous applause). I remembered all the reasonable-sounding phrases we had heard from Sir Keith about 'welfare'. Had it come to this?

There was worse. On the last night delegates sang until four in the morning from a special FCS songbook (after removing from the stage a chap who decided to sing a very long song about Margaret Thatcher's life). 'How much is that Trotsky in the window? The one with the axe in his head; I'm so glad that Trotsky is dead, is dead.' Tasteful, isn't it? Or how about 'We will knife all socialists, the socialists must be stabbed' to the tune of the *Eton Boating Song*? Or 'If you mourn dead Allende clap your hands, if you mourn dead Allende then you're really very trendy?' Even so I don't find the thought of these people running the country more frightening than the prospect of a Thatcher government. Their views on Northern Ireland are similar to those of Airey Neave; their opinion of the 'womb-scrapers of Harley Street' has been heard from Jill Knight *et al* for many years. In 40 years' time the present leadership of the Conservative students will probably bear a striking resemblance to Mrs Thatcher's current crew.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

This Little Pig

Two quite recent examples of unmarried gentlemen coming all too far out into the open and parading before us details of their sexual encounters, 'pleasant or unpleasant as the case may be', make one really wonder whether it's wise for anybody at all to get up to such tricks. For one thing, the writers who indulge in these revelations usually appear to be enjoying themselves, and when a writer is enjoying himself it may be safely assumed that nobody else is. And for another thing, sexual episodes that belong to others are a dead bore from the start. In this modern, flinch-proof world the actual gymnastics, either straight or crooked, shock no more in a book. But time was when they had to be camouflaged. Years ago one had to be alert to discover what was going on. 'And that night, in the humble wayside hotel in the hollow below Spume Tor, Maud and I made sweet music' was the sort of thing one used to read in autobiographical volumes hot from Boots' Library. One skilfully inferred from the words that they meant something more fundamental than a tuneful get-together round the hotel harmonium. And then, and worst of all, writers who go in for this sort of activity instantly lose whatever senses of humour they may once have possessed. The laughs, and there are plenty, are unintentional.

Nobody in this field made a bigger ass of himself than dreadful Frank Harris (is it still remembered that he deflowered Enid Bagnold in, if I remember rightly, a private apartment in the upper regions of the Café Royal? Our informant was the witty and courageous lady herself). His real speciality, however, was the seduction of servant girls, who at first put up a show of modesty when he started what they referred to as messing about ('Now, now, Mr Curious!') but were, according to him, soon swept away by his charms ('I tore off my boots and joined her between the sheets'). And oh dear me, the bosoms and the sighs and the bulges and the thighs. How on earth can somebody write '"Away with this naughty chemise," I cried, "Beauty must unveil",' and expect serious attention? No, it really won't do at all and intending sex autobiographers must put away both their egos and their pens.

It seems, however, that we are all at some sort of risk of unconsciously revealing our sexual selves. Even down here at Appleton I now realise that danger lurks. My information comes from the New World and from a somewhat unusual book called *The Sex Life of the Foot and Shoe* by William A. Rossi (published over here by Routledge & Kegan Paul at £4.75). The chapter headings alone spark off a number of new thoughts: 'Sex Symbols at Your Feet', 'Pedic Sadomasochism', 'Cinderella Was a Sexpot', 'Bisexual Shoes', 'Thank Your Foot for Sex', and so on. Incidentally, any similarity with any other Feet is quite unintentional.

Mr Rossi kicks off extremely strongly. 'The foot is an erotic organ and the shoe is its sexual covering.' There now! What unsettling facts to assimilate so late in life. 'Podoerotica' is, it seems, everywhere, even in Devon, but nowhere more so than in the States.

Americans, we are told, consume a billion new shoes a year and 80 per cent of them are purchased with sexual attraction in mind. Reading all this, goggle-eyed, I felt that it wouldn't be too long before dusty old Havelock Ellis popped up his hoary old head and here he is as early as page 2, chipping in with a claim that both foot and shoe are forms of erotic symbolism, upon which I peer nervously down at my comfy 'Norvic' black leather outdoor shoes from the Army & Navy Stores, size nine, five years old and wearing splendidly. And hard on H. Ellis's heels comes a Mr Rudolfsky who states that 'the word "Feet" is often used as a euphemism for the genitals'. One can only relate such startling statements to one's own world. Strolling down a muddy Devon lane on a damp day and encountering the Bultitudes swinging along on one of their invigorating walks, whatever am I to think when Mrs Bultitude informs me that the upper stream has over-flowed its banks and that she and the Colonel have got their feet wet? Furthermore, she adds that they are both exhausted and that, when they get in, they are jolly well going to put their feet up.

Selfless Mr Rossi has visited, on our behalf, no fewer than 25 countries, inspecting shoes and feet in all directions. In dreary old London he claims to have discovered a Palace of Pedic Pleasure, its clientele entertained by mobile ladies with mobile feet (directions are vague but at a guess, it's somewhere near Whiteley's) and goodness me, the assorted items of news that he provides! For example, on America's West Coast 'toe movies' are to be seen. The big toe is a phallic symbol and in Middle Europe they apparently anoint it with a mixture of vegetable oil and Spanish fly, hoping for beneficial results in other quarters.

Treat corns and bunions with beef suet laced with frankincense or, even better, asses' urine mixed with mud (recipes by courtesy of Pliny the Elder, A.D. 79). A Milwaukee shoe company asserted that their shoes relieved insomnia, constipation, eczema, catarrh and nervous indigestion. American foot fetishists can now either join the Lotus Love Foot Erotica Club or, more elaborately, stump up $30 to a dial-an-obscene-talk phone service (two 15-minute calls a week permitted to each paid-up member, and no subjects barred). A New York shoe firm advertises a scent called '*Fleurs de* Feet' (apply to the instep). Oddest of all among Mr Rossi's discoveries is the fact that King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy cut his big toe (!) nails once a year, had them framed in gold and encrusted with diamonds, and presented them ('Now Victor, you're spoiling me!') to his mistresses, as 'memen-toes' merrily quips Mr Rossi in one of his fortunately few unbuttoned moments.

The whole book has put me into a thoroughly jumpy state. What now to make of my Cousin Madge's stout brogues, let alone her wellies? If I spot Miss Entwhistle coming out of Matins and sporting 3-inch stilettos, am I really to think, as Mr Rossi would have me do, that she is 'subconsciously trying to "stab" back at men in a male-dominated world'? When the summer comes, and the Bultitudes kindly allow us all to splash about in their heated pool ('Drinks under the cedar, everybody. Just *helpez-vous-mêmes*!'), how on earth am I to stop gazing, mesmerised, at the Colonel's big toes or keep myself from wondering whether Mrs Bultitude has recently anointed them? And I begin to wish that Mr Rossi hadn't told me that a pair of feet contains 120,000 sweat glands. But despite the Pedic Palace, Mr Rossi's opinion of our 'native footwear styles' is extremely poor. He finds them 'dull, sterile, unimaginative and reflecting a definitely lower level on the sociosexual thermometer.'

And I should hope so too.

Roger Woddis

How Like a God!

'Working-class people spend most of their time and money drinking, smoking and being idle.' – Dr A. L. Rowse.

What a piece of work is A. L. Rowse!
How large the brain beneath his skull!
And yet, compared to Mickey Mouse,
How unimaginably dull!
How minuscule the faculty
That typifies the human race,
And oh! how lovely life would be
If only workers knew their place!

How sober are the well-to-do,
The masters of the written word!
How precious are the precious few!
How common are the common herd!
How brutish are the idle yobs
Who spend their time in public bars,
While all the quintessential jobs
Are done by little men from Mars!

Protesting is no earthly use,
The dreaming spires begin to crack,
The mindless many reproduce –
If only we could send them back!
If only golden lads who look
With favour on his fevered brow
Would rush to buy his latest book:
Mein Campus – get your copy now!

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Letters to the Editor

In Defence of Diana Mosley

Sir, Hugh Thomas (NS 15 April) chides Lady Mosley for attributing the Jewish 'problem' in Germany (partly) to the increased Jewish immigration during Weimar days; it 'was not substantial'. In fact, according to the census figures, the Jewish population of Prussia increased between 1910 and 1925 by over 10 per cent. After 1925 *Ostjuden* continued to come into Berlin and other cities in disproportionate numbers.

Richard Crossman (*Encounter*, June 1960) quoted Chaim Weizmann as saying that because every Gentile carries within him the 'bacillus' of anti-Semitism, the condition for an overt outbreak in any nation is that 'the number of Jews should rise beyond the safety level for that particular nation. Hence the only radical cure for anti-Semitism is the creation of the Jewish State.'

That was, in fact, the policy of Mosley's British Union, which advocated *inter alia* the availability of Palestine to all the major faiths, its partition between Jewish and Arab settlement, and the eventual voluntary emigration of the bulk of European Jews to a newly developed suitable territory elsewhere. All this is on public record, and it answers Dr Thomas's question: 'Where would they have gone?'

Diana Mosley was not entirely wrong in suggesting that the prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps were gradually released during the pre-war period. The figure of 25,000 detainees given by Dr Thomas is a reduction from the 1933-34 statistics. The numbers of criminal and political prisoners in pre-war Nazi Germany compare quite favourably with modern ones, as a perusal of Amnesty International reports will demonstrate. The number of prisoners on political, religious or racial grounds was minute in comparison to the millions in the contemporary Soviet slave-camps under Stalin, who then received considerable approbation from your journal.

Dr Thomas's scrupulous concern for accuracy, shown in his books on Spain and Cuba, should have discouraged him from repeating the slogan that the German leaders consciously killed 'nearly 6 million' Jewish people. The statistical research begun by Gerald Reitlinger, continued by Paul Rassinier, and completed by Arthur Butz, shows this to be a gross exaggeration, although nothing can minimise the moral enormity of what actually took place. I feel the same about the fate of the Armenians, the Chechens and the Cambodians.

Before people throw stones at Diana Mosley for her pre-war friendship with Hitler, let them ask why Mrs Thatcher has not publicly referred to the documented murder of millions in Communist China, or why Sir Harold Wilson liked to call certain Soviet leaders his 'friends' despite their responsibility for the installation of genocidal weapons in Cuba? What do the survivors of Hiroshima feel about the personal entourage of that American President who gave orders to burn its citizens in an instantaneous gas chamber? No humbug, please.

ROBERT STANTON

Bodgara Way
Liskeard, Cornwall

Metropolitan BBC

Sir, David Davies of BBC North West is surely right to protest (Letters 8 April) at the Annan Committee's proposal that the BBC should largely abandon its regional programmes: there are few enough of them as it is. But then the BBC itself has always appeared half-hearted about regional programming and its view of life has always been very much the view from London. Ever since the organisation came into being in the Twenties it has been grossly over-centralised in its structure, its attitudes and the accents of its announcers. It has a lot to answer for in the loss of a valuable diversity of regional identities over the last 50 years.

An ominous sign that things were getting even worse came in the 1960s when Radio 4 for the whole of England replaced the old regional Home Service. Now only Scotland and Wales have their own version of Radio 4 (so that Northumberland listeners are given the weather forecast for Kent but not for neighbouring Roxburgh), and it looks as though they will shortly have these *in addition* to an all-UK Radio 4, if the BBC carries out its threat to move Radio 4 to the present Radio 2 long-wave frequency.

Since the BBC's outrageous London-chauvinism seems to have been shared by the Annan Committee, I suppose it was only to be expected that instead of protesting at this sort of thing the Committee sought to reinforce it.

PAUL TEMPERTON
Director

Campaign for the North
Birchcliffe Centre
Hebden Bridge
West Yorkshire

Historic Houses

Sir, With regard to your leading article 'The Meaning of Mentmore' (NS 8 April) I am sure that the members of my Association would applaud your final philosophical statement: 'In our time it should be the pride of a Labour government to assert the public interest over the cheeseparing of reactionary Philistines.' Indeed, we would go as far as to pay tribute to the present Labour Government in having done more for the heritage than any previous government, particularly with regard to Capital Transfer Tax and other matters in the 1975 and 1976 Finance Acts.

However, the battle is far from over, as unfortunately civil service views have often thwarted the declared policy. It is misleading and naïve of you to state that 'the maintenance of the stately homes is assured by a complex mixture of subsidies, grants to the National Trust, loans and tax concessions'. The fact is that a large majority of houses open to the public do not receive subsidies, loans or tax concessions. I am sure it would come as a surprise to most of your readers that, except for a few historic houses which are fully commercially run, there is no tax relief for owners who wish to use their dwindling family resources to maintain their houses in proper repair. There is an urgent need for a new tax case to cover the hundreds of small houses in this country, which are as much a tourist attraction as are the large houses.

Lady Birk recently stated in the House of Lords that it was the Government's view that by far the cheapest way of maintaining these houses was to leave them in private hands. Thus political will, as evidenced in the Select Committee on the Wealth Tax, is non-partisan and clear. The means seem to be as obscure as the mythological Land Fund, which, as in the case of Mentmore, is strangely incapable of fufilling its purpose as laid down by Hugh Dalton. Our members are committed to the principle of public access. We desperately want the means to enable us to continue as unpaid custodians of part of our heritage.

MONTAGU OF BEAULIEU

Palace House
Beaulieu, Hants.

The Grunwick Dispute

Sir, I read with interest the letter from George Ward, the managing director of Grunwick Processing Laboratories Ltd (NS 15 April). Mr Ward is not quibbling about minor facts, he is making statements that are wholly untrue. It is wholly untrue to say that APEX recruited dismissed employees. When the workers, who were not organised at Grunwick, went out on strike, last August, they decided to join APEX. It was not until September, after the union had unsuccessfully sought to meet the company, to resolve the issues that gave rise to the walk-out by the employees, that the company sacked the strikers.

Then Mr Ward claims that Grunwick is a non-union company but not an anti-union compay. Laurie Pavitt, the respected Member of Parliament for the constituency that contains Grunwick, has stated in the House of Commons that twice in the last ten years, the company has sacked people for becoming members of a union. The TUC Industrial Relations Bulletin of 4 June 1973, reporting on decisions on redundancy payments cases, refers to a case of *Mulvey* v. *Grunwick Processing Laboratories* (London, March 1973). Miss Mulvey was one of five employees dismissed after they joined the TGWU, a combination of circumstances which Grunwick claimed was pure coincidence. Miss Mulvey had been told that she was redundant and was asked to leave the same day with no wages in lieu of notice, although legal representatives of Grunwick repaired that last omission by giving her one week's wages immediately before the Tribunal hearing began. The Tribunal held that the 'manner of dismissal left something to be desired' but that a strict interpretation of the Code of Industrial Relations Practice could not be brought to bear where only a small number of employees was involved and the employer was a small company.

Why, if Mr Ward contends that his employees would vote against recognition for APEX, did he not carry out the undertaking he gave to the Union of Post Office Workers, that he would cooperate with the ACAS in examining our claim for recognition? The fact is that Mr Ward dragged up one excuse after another to prevent the ACAS, as an independent body, making an inquiry of his workpeople

The Logic of IQ

What do IQ tests measure? Is there a genetic component? What are the social and educational implications of IQ testing? In a major book review in this week's Times Educational Supplement Professor Nicholas Mackintosh suggests that most of the contributors to the current debate are still barking resolutely up the wrong tree.

THE TIMES
Educational Supplement

every Friday 15p

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and of the members of APEX who are involved in the dispute. Why did Mr Ward give substantial increases to his staff shortly before the ballot was due? I hold a sworn affidavit that Mr Ward told his employees in each department that they would vote by departments, as they did, and he would, therefore, be aware of how each department voted in the MORI ballot.

Finally, Mr Ward creates a monstrous picture of trade unions, and of our members in this dispute, by stating: 'They wish to return only to organise strikes, official or otherwise, disrupt production and manufacture disputes.' This bogey created by Mr Ward has no relation to our members, who are not politically motivated, who worked hard for him for very poor pay, and who want the right to work hard and the right to be represented through people of their own choice. It certainly is a monstrous misrepresentation of the policies of APEX – well known for its right-wing policies. Mr Ward has no excuse for creating such a figment and publicising it as his personal belief, because on the one and only occasion when I met him during the course of this dispute, when we both sat in the gallery at the House of Commons, he told me and my president, Denis Howell MP, that he had had both of us 'researched'. I am sure Mr Ward has had APEX 'researched', and knows well our policies of refusing to countenance disputes until procedure has been exhausted, unless our members have held a ballot, and, thereafter, a national official of the union has met the company to see whether the issue can be resolved without a dispute.

Mr Ward's quarrel is not really with APEX or with our members. It is with the principle of trade unionism, which he thinks once accepted would prevent him from 'controlling his employees' in any way in the interests of producing goods. That is why this dispute is so important. It is not merely that our members are primarily immigrants, it is not merely that we are dealing with a sector of industry in which there is very poor organisation, with consequent low pay for the staff of many companies; it is fundamentally that the issue is about the right to be a member of a trade union and to have representation.

ROY GRANTHAM
General Secretary

APEX
22 Worple Road
London SW19

Two Chinas

Sir, As interesting as Robin Blackburn's conclusions on Mao and China were (NS 8 April), I found them sadly lacking. Perhaps the reason for this stemmed from the fact that he completely overlooked the 1959 conquest (and consequent suppression) of Tibet.

Had this very important issue been given the attention it deserves I feel sure that the writer would be forced to recognise (as did the International Commission of Jurists) that Mao and China are quite capable of blatant acts of thuggery and violence comparable to those exercised in the Soviet Union under Stalin.

MIKE DONOVAN

195 Shooters Hill Road
Blackheath
London SE3

Sir, When Robin Blackburn writes on China he gives us more information on his own prejudices than on China. About China he is often wrong. The days when there was no alternative to seeing 'the same film 20 times' are gone. Last year, for instance, there was a new film almost every week though I feel that I did, perhaps, see a similar film 20 times.

More important, urban middle-school graduates are not sent to 'labour colonies' but go to rural people's communes where they live and work with the peasant members of the communes. Few of them stay longer than two years and though some volunteers go to distant places like Tibet or Mongolia, where living conditions are quite hard, many are near home. In the market garden communes around Peking, the 'educated youths' often go home on Sundays with their washing.

FRANCES WOOD

5 Leighton Road
London NW5

The Body-Carers

Sir, Nell Dunn (Letters 8 April) and Ron Brown (Letters 15 April) are using a sledge hammer to crack a peanut. Of course, most food advertising is silly, sometimes moronic. But women, probably correctly, consider themselves more knowledgeable about food, usually buy it, and are, by now, probably immune to the grosser idiocies in advertising.

No one is 'burdened' by health, only by disease. If a woman thinks she is an expert on diet, why shouldn't she do what she is good at? All such letters do is to infuriate anti-Women's Libbers.

ANNA BACSICH

11 Ashton Road
Glasgow

Travelling People

Sir, I was somewhat surprised to read Bill Forrester's letter (NS 8 April). He seems to have missed the big problems facing local government in dealing with travelling people's problems:

(1) There is a distinction between genuine gypsies and itinerants.

(2) It is the itinerant scrap metal merchant that causes all the trouble. They make any place where they stay a rubbish dump and when they move on the local authority has to pay for the clearing up.

(3) It is because of the itinerant scrap metal people that local authorities find it almost impossible to persuade district councils to allow standing sites in their areas, due to the opposition of local residents.

(4) The normal gypsies selling pegs, etc., are accepted by everyone because they are clean and tidy and we have no difficult with them at all.

If we were dealing with traditional gypsies then I believe there would be no problem at all, but we are not so doing. Bill Forrester could do a lot for his people if he differentiated between those travellers who create filth and those who are genuine. For myself, I would advocate that all scrap metal merchants should have a permanent place of business and thus they would not be allowed to foul our lay-byes and grass verges. After all, they do seem to be making quite a lot of money and should be forced to have a proper place for their activities. As it is, they make it very difficult for the genuine travelling people and, so long as they are allowed to leave their filth all over the place, the genuine gypsies will inevitably suffer.

HARRY BAILEY
Chairman
Planning and Transportation Committee
Northamptonshire County Council
9 York Road
Higham Ferrers
Northants.

Fan Club

Sir, What possesses Michael Moorcock (NS 15 April) to call Ursula Le Guin 'hyprocritical'? I suppose he means that she is merely a practitioner of a despised genre, falsely professing (in *Science Fiction at Large*) to be devoted to loftier purposes, such as literature and the creation of character. If so, he libels her, for all her creative work, which comprises a great deal more than her science fiction, shows just the commitment he disbelieves. I suppose he can't have read much of that work, or simply doesn't like it. Either way, he can hardly be forgiven for writing as if an insult was valid criticism. Let me reassure admirers of Mrs Le Guin: they will find her essay as intelligent, well-written and good-mannered as could be expected.

HUGH BROGAN

University of Essex
Colchester

Gremlins

Sir, I hope there weren't too many of your readers who believed three unfortunate misprints towards the end of my article on Barbara Wootton's work last week. She constructed 'causal' not 'casual' models, put her greatest hopes in the social 'sciences' not 'services', and had lived long enough to find her major ideas 'increasingly' not 'universally' accepted.

PETER TOWNSEND

University of Essex
Colchester

Taylor on Childers

Sir, A. J. P. Taylor ('Rational Martyr', NS 8 April) ought to know that republicans rejected Lloyd George's Treaty not because it excluded the Six Counties but because it involved an acceptance of British sovereignty and an oath of allegiance to the crown. Those who, like himself, choose to regard this as 'extremism and irrationality' may care to consider the present conditions of that part of Ireland where that sovereignty still prevails.

HERBERT MCCABE O.P.

Blackfriars
Oxford

Forewarned

Sir, I have sad news for Mervyn Jones (London Diary, 8 April). He won't escape the Jubilee by going to Fruska Gora. Having recently returned from those parts, I can assure him that, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, there is an inordinate interest, especially amongst old ladies, in the affairs of our Royals. I bet him 50 dinars that he does not escape being questioned about (a) Princess Margaret's love life; or (b) Princess Anne's expected baby.

FRED SINGLETON

21 Eaton Road
Ilkley, Yorks.

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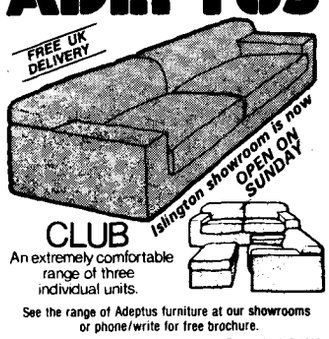

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

V. S. Pritchett

All the President's Men

The Autumn of the Patriarch by GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ translated by Gregory Rabassa *Cape* £4.50

It has often been said of the Spanish nature and – by extension – of those who have inherited Iberian influences in South America, that the ego is apt to leap across middle ground and see itself as a universe. The leap is to an All. The generalisation itself skips a great deal too, but it is a help towards beginning to understand the astonishing richness of the South American novelists of recent years. Their 'All' – and I think of Vargas Llosa and García Márquez among others – is fundamentally 'the people', not in the clichés of political rhetoric, but in the sense of millions of separate lives, no longer anonymous but physically visible, awash in historical memory and with identities. In the case of Márquez, and especially in his latest novel, the All is not ideological or metaphysical, but the energy of his people's marvelling, collective, fable-making consciousness as it creates and re-creates illusions by which they live. The physically real is the marvellous. The ultimate 'All' may be illusion itself. Life is ephemeral but dignified by fatality; the word 'ephemeral' often crops up in *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, which has been brilliantly translated by Gregory Rabassa – the original Spanish would be beyond even those foreigners who read Spanish.

The Patriarch who gives the novel its moral theme is the elusive despot of a South American republic and we hear him in the scattered voices of his people and his own. As a young wild bull he is the traditional barefoot peasant leader; later he is the confident monster ruthlessly collecting the spoils of power, indifferent to murder and massacre, sustained by his simple peasant mother, surviving by cunning. Still later, in old age, he is a puppet manipulated by the succeeding juntas, who are selling off the country to exploiters, a Caliban cornered but tragic, with a terrifying primitive will to survive. His unnamed republic looks out on the Caribbean from a barren coast from which the sea has receded, so that he believes, as superstitiously as his people do, that foreigners have even stolen the sea.

By the time the novel opens he is a myth to his people. Those who think they have seen him have probably seen only his double, though they may have glimpsed his hand waving from a limousine. He himself lives among the remnants of his concubines, the lepers and beggars that infest the Presidential fort. By this time his mother is dead. He stamps round on his huge feet and is mainly concerned with milking his cows in the dairy attached to his mansion. Power is in the hands of an untrusted minister. The President no longer leaves the place but drowses as he reads of speeches he has never made, celebrations he has never attended, applause he has never heard, in the newspaper of which only one copy is printed and solely for himself. He is, in short, an untruth; a myth in the public mind, a dangerous animal decaying in 'the solitary vice' of despotic power, fearing one more attempt at assassination and, above all, the ultimate solitude of death.

At first sight the book is a capricious mosaic of multiple narrators. We slide from voice to voice in the narrative without warning, in the course of the long streaming sentences of consciousness. But the visual, animal realism is violent and forever changing: we are swept from still moments of domestic fact to vivid fantasy, back and forth in time from, say, the arrival of the first Dutch discoverers to the old man looking at television, in the drift of hearsay and memory.

The few settled characters are like unforgettable news flashes that disturb and disappear: the richness of the novel will not be grasped in a single reading. We can complain that it does not progress but returns upon itself in widening circles. The complaint is pointless: the spell lies in the immediate force of its language and the density of narrative. We can be lost in those interminable sentences and yet once one has got the hang of the transitions from one person to the next it is all as sharp as the passing moment is because Márquez is the master weaver of the real and the conjectured. His descriptive power astounds at once, in the first 40 pages where the narrator is a naïve undefined 'we' i.e., the people, who break into the fortress of the tragic monster and find their Caliban dead among the cows that have long ago broken out of the dairy and graze off the carpets in the salons of the ruined Presidencia and even have appeared, lowing like speakers, on the balconies. This is from the opening scene:

> When the first vultures began to arrive, rising up from where they had dozed on the cornices of the charity hospital, they came from farther inland, they came in successive waves, out of the horizon of the sea of dust where the sea had been, for a whole day they flew in slow circles of the house of power until a king with bridal feathers and a crimson ruff gave a silent order and that breaking of glass began, that breeze of a great man dead, that in and out of vultures through the windows imaginable only in a house which lacked authority, so we dared go in too and in the deserted sanctuary we found the rubble of grandeur, the body that had been pecked at, the smooth maiden hands with the ring of power on the bone of the third finger, and his whole body was sprouting tiny lichens and parasitic animals from the depths of the sea, especially in the armpits and the groin, and he had the canvas truss of his herniated testicle which was the only thing that had escaped the vultures in spite of its being the size of an ox kidney; but even then we did not dare believe in his death because it was the second time he had been found in that office, alone and dressed and dead seemingly of natural causes during his sleep, as had been announced a long time ago in the prophetic waters of soothsayers' basins.

Only his double had been able to show him his 'untruth': that useful ignoramus died of poison intended for his master. There was a period when the President really was of the people, the easy joker who might easily get an upland bridegroom murdered so that he himself could possess the bride. The dictator's peasant mother who carries on in his mansion, sitting at her sewing machine as if she were still in her hut, is the only one aware of his tragedy. (Once when he was driving to a ceremonial parade she rushed after him with a basket of empties telling him to drop them at the shop when he passed. The violent book has many homely touches.) His brutal sexual assaults are not resented: – he fucks with his boots and uniform on – but when very late he comes to feel love, he is at a loss. On a Beauty Queen of the slum called the Dog District, he pours gadgets and imported rubbish, even turns the neighbourhood into a smart suburb: she is immovable and he is almost mad.

He kidnaps a Jamaican novice nun and marries her, but two years pass before he dares go to bed with her. She spends her time bargaining for cheap toys in the market. She surrenders to him not out of love but out of pity and teaches him to read and sign his name. The market people hate her trading habits and her fox furs and set dogs on her and her children: they are torn to pieces and eaten. There is a frightful scene where his supposedly loyal minister organises an insurrection. The old man's animal instinct detects this and the murder plot in the conspiracy. The Minister warns him: 'So things are in no shape for licking your fingers, general Sir, now we really are fucked up.' The wily old man won't budge but sends down a cartload of milk for the rebels and when the orderly uncorks the first barrel there is a roar and they see the man

> floating on the ephemeral backwash of a dazzling explosion and they saw nothing else until the end of time in the volcanic heat of the mournful yellow mortar building in which no flower ever grew, whose ruins remained suspended in the air from the tremendous explosion of six barrels of dynamite. That's that, he sighed in the Presidential palace, shaken by the seismic wind that blew down four more houses around the barracks and broke the wedding crystal in cupboards all the way to the outskirts of the city.

The President turns to his dominoes and when he sees the double five turn up, he guesses that the traitor behind the rebellion is his old friend of a lifetime, the Minister. He is invited to a banquet and, at the stroke of 12, 'the distinguished Mayor General Roderigo de Aguilar entered on a silver tray, stretched out, garnished with cauliflower and laurel, steeped with spices

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and oven brown' – and, in all his medals, is served up roast. The guests are forced to eat him.

Márquez is the master of a spoken prose that passes unmoved from scenes of animal disgust and horror to the lyrical evocation, opening up vistas of imagined or real sights which may be gentle or barbarous. The portrait of the mother who eventually dies of a terrible cancer is extraordinary. He has tried to get the Papal Nuncio to canonise her and, when Rome refuses, the President makes her a civil saint and has her embalmed body carried round the country. Avidly the people make up miracles for her. Once more, in his extreme old age and feeble, there is another insurrection, plotted by a smooth aristocratic adviser. The President survives. In his last night alive he wanders round the ruined house, counting his cows, searching for lost ones in rooms and closets; and he has learned that because of his incapacity for love he has tried to 'compensate for that infamous fate with the burning cultivation of the solitary vice of power' which is a fiction. 'We' (the multiple narrator concludes less tritely) 'knew who we were while he was left never knowing it for ever . . .' The 'All' is not an extent, it is a depth.

Russell Davies

All Guns Firing

No Fool Like An Old Fool by GAVIN EWART *Gollancz* £2.95
Song of the Battery Hen by EDWIN BROCK *Secker & Warburg* £3.50
Our Ship by JOHN MOLE *Secker & Warburg* £2.90
The Dream-House by KEVIN CROSSLEY-HOLLAND *Deutsch* £1.95

> We all want total praise
> for every word we write
> not for a singular phrase;
> we're ready to turn and bite
> the thick malicious reviewers
> our hated and feared pursuers.

Thus the brilliant Gavin Ewart in his sumptuous new collection, a Gollancz shiny-back all a-bulge with insight and euphony, now recording vertiginous leaps of association, now sounding deep resonant bongs on the lower heartstrings. His words, mark my words, are remarkable words. Not since Auden . . . George Gordon . . . Lizzie Borden . . . stunning . . . a corker. That should do for now.

Unto every one as 'ath shall be given, and it is really because Ewart's mood in this volume does not need improving that I offer him these crazed tributes. He is a buoyant spirit, in spite of all – and at a time when most poets give you just the all, relentless good humour is to be prized. There is no humour without variety, either, so even when, in the more serious half of his book, Ewart is retailing a fairly grisly World War II anecdote (Spitfire demonstrating strafe-power machine-guns the audience instead of the dummies provided), he feels able to take a risk and put it over in straggling lines

> he passed with all guns firing; some fell
> on their faces, flat,
> but the benefit was minimal that anyone
> had from that

which sometimes flirt with McGonagallism:

> But bitterness and flippancy don't
> compensate for men's lives
> and official notification was posted to
> mothers and wives.

In his silly section, oddly enough, Ewart has a go at emulating Scotland's bardic newscaster himself; but 'William McGonagall on England's Failure to Qualify for The World Cup, 1974' is not a success, because Ewart is better working the trick the other way round, letting his natural ebullient intolerance to boredom work its way out through the texture of soberer subjects. His talent is its item optimum stretch when, as he remarks in his little verse-essay on 'Last Movements' in chamber music, 'a wistfulness in the rumti-ti-tum might be detected'. The conclusions seldom amount to much as a critique of life: 'Probably no one completely outgrows his childhood', 'It's best for geniuses to travel light.' But the ways of getting there – via a sonnet to unseemly phrases that lurk in the mind ('Glumdalclitch's clitoris'), or a valediction to the cricket season, a fake blurb, or a horrible polemic against the sadistic lottery that is cancer of the breast – are determinedly circuitous and strange. Ewart always goes out of his way, and it's daft not to follow him when's he on form.

Edwin Brock – I believe that all these poets have been recently published in the NS, by the way – is a marginally similar case to Ewart. He too has been an advertising copywriter, a trade which (like criticism) morally obliges its practitioners to spend some of their time sending themselves up; and like Ewart (though Ewart's satirical eye is half on Betjeman), Brock has reached an age when it is painful, rather than merely poignant or funny, to contemplate the cuddly toys of his infancy, for Brock is the custodian not just of his own stuffed dog Towser but his wife's bear, Mow, a creature formerly kept in excellent repair. Now, though, the marriage has broken down:

> I would like you to take Mow back.
> It is mutilated now: the eyes
> are torn out and little strips of
> wood-shaving fall whenever it
> is touched. I do not need Mow,
> neither do the children.

And the way Brock concludes his statement reveals him as a poet prepared to take ruthless advantage of his analogies:

> One day I will
> send you your son, eyeless, with
> his guts trailing on the floor, and
> show you the way your daughter falls
> every night from the foot of her bed.

This book is dominated by the sense of hurt proceeding from the break-up; with a man as verbally aware as Brock, the bitterest feelings are bound to seem the most piercingly felt. But if Brock lacks the kind of performing instinct that makes Ewart occasionally exhilarating ('It's a great mistake, jampacked with error,/farctate with jumbo disappointments'), he has a comparable gift for ageing well and honestly, even in the bedroom:

> Sometimes when you catch my eye
> I do a comedian shuffle, acknowledging
> the joke
> about my loud paunch, the profile of
> my buttocks.

Young John Mole is a variable soul, and as he's apparently a jazz clarinettist, I'd be willing to bet he doesn't share Brock's weight problem. Clarinet men are notoriously jumpy and prominent of rib. Certainly Mole's poetry tends in those directions, though when he allows it to settle into longer lines, longer breaths, a sympathetic soloist emerges. I don't think there's anything in the book to beat 'The Punch Family', in which a boy who by day observes the Punch-and-Judy show with something like terror, finds its hideousness reproduced, back at the 'grim hotel', in the unnameable wrongness of his parents' moods:

> What huge stick in the silence
> hung above them? When would it
> hammer down
> and end this? When would she cry
> or he be gone forever?

There is more future in this openly, even spaciously presented emotion, I think, than is so far evident in Mole's all-purpose hermetic style.

The picture of Kevin Crossley-Holland on the back of his new volume puts him in line for Handsomest Poet in Britain if nothing else. But also, I was disgusted to note, once I had got over the shock of mistaking his table of contents for a poem called 'Contents' (it does look rather like one), he is a serious and strong poet who can, for example, get away with setting such socially infected articles as 'copies of Reveille' and the term 'bio-degradable' against a (literally) lapidary refrain: 'But the essence of stone is the smell of rain.' But Crossley-Holland does not habitually court such schizophrenia: not in a single poem anyway, though this collection does split fairly cleanly between intimate personal poems (among which the fine elegy and title poem 'The Dream-House' is rather too outstanding for the book's own good), and those dark evocations – full of vastnesses and fastnesses and the prevailing winds on Celtic shores – for which this poet is already known. In his archaeological world of shards and scrapings and wind-scrubbed bone, there is a good deal to remind one of the Italian poet Montale; but the commandeering tone his verbal compression acquires ('We shoaled on the Staithe, stared out and possessed it') comes straight from the Middle Ages; and the warriors' campaigning songs. A strange resurrection altogether.

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Dennis Potter

Glop

Visions Before Midnight by CLIVE JAMES *Cape* £3.95

Does he narrow his glittering eyes and ho-ho derisively at the little screen across screwed-up piles of abandoned jokes and discarded doggerel? Is his mouth full of salted peanuts, are his lips wet with tinned beer? Do people wander by accident into the gymnasium where he is *viewing* and tiptoe out again, awed and embarrassed? Does he pull up a – what could it be? A chair? A vaulting horse? – and leer at the twinkling tube, his jackaroo's visage a mere snort or two from the action? And when the picture collapses into a whining blob at the end of transmission, can the others who may be trapped behind high windows in the household pick up the sound of someone down below whistling in the dark?

In much the same way (let's pretend) that Keats wanted to know the exact position in which Shakespeare sat when quilling his way through 'to be or not to be', so I would give the skin of a lemon to have seen the unlikely posture as well as the improbable setting in which Clive James watched the magic box before he tapped out on his worn but neoteric keys 'Mission Impossible is glop from the schlock-hopper' in that ritzy New York-Cambridge-Rockdale Odeon amalgam he has almost made his own.

One needs to know these crucial details, of course, to help keep at two fingers' length the vigour and comic brilliance of an invented world of jabbering mannequins that is itself made out of the electronic simulacrum of 'real life' beyond the lens. Clive James's television reviews are sufficiently potent to turn the pale glimmers on the set into something like a gaudily lit portable theatre of clacking wooden puppets speaking a splintered language that has never been heard before and yet which is instantly, and hilariously, recognisable. His stunning weekly pieces in the *Observer* readjust horizontal and vertical holds almost before there is time to blink away the images that were actually transmitted. This collection of reviews, culled from four years of self-delighted service in the column, enables readers who can swallow the temerity of such a book to forget the pictures altogether and concentrate on the omnipresent puppet master himself.

He is nothing if not sardonic, so he makes sure that mainly the dross becomes the grist of his flailing mill. He is clever, in the sense that the late Lord Salisbury understood the word. Cute. Sharp. He scoffs lethally, but mostly at that which is generally derided. He stings like a cattle prod, though he imagines it to be an ice pick. No one on the funny farm is more brutally efficient at herding gabbling sports commentators or melamined beauty queens into the ducking pond, but he often takes silent cover when tougher beasts pass by on their way to the trough. And though he does not bleed, he wants, begs you to acknowledge that *he cannot be fooled*. Why, he even saw through Nixon.

Best of all, Clive James is sure that he owns a pair, at least, of panoptic eyeballs, swivelling pitilessly below a brow that can comprehend *everything* between *It's a Knock-Out* and the *Eurovision Song Contest*. Suspicious of rhetoric, gleeful about glop, frenzied into froth by all speech dislocations except (apparently) his own pronunciation 'penis', he is nevertheless prepared to issue the occasional emphatic statement of faith. It is extremely moving: 'Television', he says, and not out of the side of his mouth, 'is for everybody. It follows that a television critic, at his best, is everybody too – he must enjoy diversity without being eclectic and stay receptive without being gulled.'

Oh, don't laugh, for God's sake. When your technique depends on the deft snigger, your wit on the easy victim, your passing solemnity on assent to what is generally assented to, then it is too much to bear when others are provoked into scorn about your own place in the gazebo. The second person singular may be a hapless reference to myself but I do not intend it so. Newspaper critics, however, have tender skins, for they know that they engage in a trivial activity, one removed from chatter. How much more culpable, then, to do it in a trivial way. And this, for all the pyrotechnics, is what Clive James does. It is the best oiled, most spectacular schlock-crusher in the business but nothing very much more.

Those who get bitten by a critic's vulpine fangs almost always cry out, in the agony of their little death, for the salve of 'constructive criticism' with which to bind up their torn flesh. James rightly dismisses this standard ploy as 'the eternal plea of the kitsch-merchant'. Let him now hold his tongue, then: a manoeuvre that reduces a man to making a noise like glop-glop-*glop*!

Andrew Motion

Natural

Edward Thomas on the Countryside: A Selection of his Prose and Verse edited by Roland Gant *Faber* £4.95

Edward Thomas's prose is as voluminous as it is various: between 1897 and 1917 he published 30 volumes of topography, biography, criticism and essays; introduced 16 editions and anthologies; and produced over a million words of review. Very little of this was undertaken with pleasure; most of it was accepted as a means of supporting himself and his family, and kept him, he wrote to Gordon Bottomley, 'so confoundedly busy I feel as if the back of my head would come out'. Moreover, the burden was increased by the fastidiousness with

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— Christopher Wordsworth, *Guardian*

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— Jane Miller, *The Times Literary Supplement*

***'Bear,* like its smelly, shambling, dangerous eponym, turns out to be a quite unscandalous success.'**
— Victoria Glendinning, *Observer*

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— Jeremy Brooks, *Sunday Times*

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— Myrna Blumberg, *The Times*

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which he intended to write: having, as he said himself, 'no genial command of nonsense, flowing as from an overfilled pen', he was forced to create 'hasty compilations, ill arranged, inaccurate and incomplete' and so to deny those aspects of his nature which emerged in the poems written during the last two and a half years of his life.

Although Thomas's harsh judgment of his own prose is frequently all too correct, the habit of self-deprecation which was stimulated by his disappointment led him to sell short its scattered virtues. A selection is certainly necessary and should be valuable. It is, therefore, unfortunate that the choice of subjects made by Roland Gant in *Edward Thomas on the Countryside* only occasionally shows Thomas at his best and seldom indicates the diversity of his achievements. As his title suggests, Mr Gant has confined himself to examples of the tramping Thomas, and each of the four sections 'Roads and Footpaths', 'The Lie of the Land', 'Figures in the Landscape' and 'Through the Year' celebrate scenery and character in terms which are often tainted by the imprecision and 'dead rhythms' of which Thomas himself complained. This, from *The South Country*, shows them at their most destructive:

> Then I saw a huge silence of meadows, of woods, and beyond these, of hills that raised two breasts of empurpled turf into the sky; and, above the hills, one mountain of cloud that beamed as it reposed in the blue as in a sea. The white cloud buried London with a *requiescat in pace.*

The extracts are by no means all as dire as this, but the passage is useful in highlighting weaknesses which compromised Thomas throughout his prose career. He had taken his place in the rural tradition at the end of a century in which the documentary clarity of, for example, Cobbett had gradually been replaced by the more personal and reflective tone of writers such as Hudson, Bourne and Jefferies. Thomas was well aware of this shift of emphasis, and knew that it provided temptations for him to indulge his talent for fine writing; but even his discriminating admiration for Jefferies ('not a year passed', he admitted, 'without many copious thoughts of him') did not prevent him from undermining precisely observed scenes worthy of *The Amateur Poacher* with literary posturings reminiscent of the worst of *The Dewy Morn.* While Mr Gant's selection shows the persistence of these flaws it does not indicate the strenuous efforts that Thomas made to escape them. He did, in fact, slowly curb his rhetorical impulses, and experimented with a large number of different forms in order to find the best means of expressing what Helen Thomas called his 'strange complex temperament'.

In his autobiographical essay *How I Began,* Thomas describes how 'the time was to come when I wrote very much as I spoke', and although he achieved this naturalness intermittently in his prose, it was only when he turned to writing poems that he reaped the full reward of his labour. Because they are the culmination of his life as 'a doomed hack', our understanding of them should be increased by an anthology such as this. Not only does the prose allow us to watch the painstaking self-definition of a major poet, it also anticipates many phrases and ideas which were to be refined later. The parallels between this extract from the first chapter of *The Icknield Way* and his poem 'Roads' are characteristic:

> The road . . . is a silent companion always ready for us, whether it is night or day, wet or fine, whether we are calm or desperate, well or sick. It is always going: it has never gone right away and no man is too late.

> I love roads:
> The goddesses that dwell
> Far along invisible
> Are my favourite gods.
>
> Roads go on
> While we forget, and are
> Forgotten like a star
> That shoots and is gone.

Mr Gant has compiled an agreeable handbook for ramblers: interested readers should also look up Edna Longley's excellent edition of *Poems and Last Poems* (Collins £1.75).

Rosemary Dinnage

Couch-Fodder

Tales From a Psychiatrist's Couch by CATHERINE STORR *Quartet* £4.25

Although so many writers produce better work in their stories than in their novels, short stories have long been treated with undeserved contempt by publishers and reviewers; now Catherine Storr has hit upon an excellent new ploy for boosting status and sales. The surrealist dust-jacket of *Tales from a Psychiatrist's Couch* suggests a promising mixture of occultism and naughty bits; at the same time it makes it whackingly clear that these are fictions, not case-histories – so clear that we sophisticated readers, not silly enough to be fooled by *that* sort of thing, are clearly intended to wonder whether we have met Stefan de Beaucour, who writes books containing 'a discreet amount of sex, coloured by a sort of weary cynicism' or Roy Field, 'up-and-coming young man who would certainly eventually find his way into politics'. Add an irresistibly modest flavour of one-upmanship about the psychiatric life – on being introduced at parties, shrinks are apt to be challenged with 'I suppose you know everything I'm thinking', their friends expect them to have second sight and sort out their emotional lives, and they have colleagues who write papers called 'The Freudian Approach to the Incest Problem' (unlikeliest title of the year?) – add this and we have a whole new style of packaging.

One of the nuggets that Ms Storr has quarried from her practice is that truth is stranger than fiction. Indeed it can be. I am a sucker for real case-histories, partly because they aren't usually as dull as the text that surrounds them, partly because they can contain surprises, naughty bits, and glimpses of that extraordinary region, other people's dreams, and partly because, well, truth *is* stranger than fiction and they smell of truth. But in fact no one is going to indiscreetly take Ms Storr's characters for real patients or scan the dinner-party tables for Stefan or Roy, because every one of her tales has a facile, fictional feel to it. The limp little twitch of the 'surprise ending', which got the short story its bad name, crops up all too often: a paralysed man loses a footloose wife, finds a new one in a devoted nurse, then loses *her* when he is cured and she has no one to nurse; a friend enlists the shrink to look into the shocking case of her brother's introducing a lovely girl into the matrimonial home – but it is the lovely girl and the wife who are having it off. Sworn affidavits that the situations 'really' happened wouldn't alter their lack of conviction as related.

One or two stories seem to exist mainly to pay off a score or air a prejudice – they can have little other point: 'The Mother' is about the cheery gynaecologist with sandy eyelashes who insists that a 14-year-old have her baby because it will ennoble her character, and 'Vampire Mum' about a patient referred by a hard-line Freudian (the very same with an approach to the incest problem) because he is analysing her son. This possessive lady insists, it seems, on overseeing her son's clothes, friends, and outings, but it emerges that he is not 20 but just turned 11: 'of course I could have been wrong in thinking Mrs Bernstein a nice, ordinary mother, who was using her intelligence to do the best she could for her son' – of course. The nearest thing to a real-life chunk out of the file is 'Lucky Liz', simperingly pleased with everything (except her eczema) until she cracks, finds a real, rather mean husband, and is glad to live fairly unluckily ever after.

The best of the bunch is also the briefest and neatest: working-class bloke is sent along with doctor's letter, illegible; therapist tries without giving herself away to find out what ails him. 'It's the birds, doctor. The pigeons.' Can't be incest or paedophilia, then. Rare, previously unreported sexual deviation? No; Pat can't read, and wants help with getting stuck into the *Pigeon Fancier's Gazette.*

The tales from the couch are no sooner read than forgotten, but there is one worrying thing. What, we discover, do they talk about at 'one of those dinner parties where three out of five of us were connected, one way or another, with psychiatry'? Just what our most paranoid fantasies had always suggested: us, the rest of us, the couch-fodder. 'Very discreetly', of course, 'no names mentioned,' and only 'interesting' cases. Moral: if you find yourself on the couch, don't be interesting enough to make a Hampstead dinner party.

Among this week's contributors:

DENNIS POTTER is currently working on a six-part play for BBC television, *Pennies from Heaven.*

DEREK MAHON has just been appointed Writer in Residence at the new University of Ulster.

ANDREW MOTION is at present engaged in a study of Edward Thomas.

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Julian Barnes

Decent Exposure

The Great Pursuit by TOM SHARPE *Secker & Warburg* £3.90

Unlike nature, literature has no rules about a vacuum; but publishers, booksellers, reviewers hooked on comparative criticism, and the more insecure of readers, all do. A few years ago, when the great Wodehouse was still gambolling around in his late eighties, furtive, impertinent attempts were already being made to locate a successor: someone not just funny but innocent of seriousness, and above all someone *reliable*, regular in turning his stuff out, a professional writing for the professional classes. Frankly, there wasn't much around when the scouts went out: most of the comic novelists were hobbled by serious intentions. The younger Waugh was a possibility; but wasn't his temperament a bit unsound? It was, and he proved it by going broody over PLR; not at all professional, that.

Then came Tom Sharpe. Reliable he certainly is: *The Great Pursuit* (Mr Sharpe has some debts to pay for the English he read at Cambridge) is his sixth novel since 1971; Trollope-like, he has already completed the next one. Despite starting with two novels about South Africa (which might argue Serious, or at least satirical, intent), he has quickly established himself as the longed-for article, a genuine farceur. His characters are suitably inflated into grotesque bulges; frightful things happen gaily; and nothing serious underlies an unambiguous intention to amuse. Mr Sharpe himself has even chipped in with a warming attack on mean-spirited critics who have 'turned reading from an essentially enjoyable activity, into something *meaningful*'. He has been a success, and Secker have recently reissued his first three novels (*Riotous Assembly*, *Indecent Exposure*, *Porterhouse Blue*, £3.90 each) in one of those Uniform editions which threaten to become Collected.

Mr Sharpe has certain undeniable talents. He knows how to develop a farcical plot out of a single moment of panicky misunderstanding, drawing it out, twisting it round, working in other lines in the counterpoint of *malentendu*, and finally shaking it all out like a magician's knot. In *The Great Pursuit* a literary agent sells a novel he has been sent anonymously, discovers he has a hit, and needs to produce an author; an aspiring writer is brought in as front-man, but gets ideas above his station; publishers have to be conned or bought; and the literary intruder himself is held in a constant tension by ambition (real and surrogate), greed, love, blackmail and self-disgust. Mr Sharpe works such psychological dilemmas very deftly; he shows an agreeable tartness towards his characters which includes (in the earlier novels at least) cheerfully killing them off; and he has a pretty low cliché count.

But (you may have sensed a loitering *but*) one has regretfully to ask whether or not Mr Sharpe's novels are actually funny; and not merely funny, but 'murderously' (*Sunday Telegraph*), 'extremely' (*Observer*), 'explosively' (*Sunday Times*) so. Here are some comic lines:

> Frensic, whose appearance tended to limit his sensual pleasures to putting things into himself rather than into other people, was something of a gourmet . . . If this is the good news, can leprosy be far behind? . . . In a thousand years who the dickens would care who had written *Great Expectations*? . . . She had praised the obviously great and cursed the rest and for that simple formula she was known as a great scholar.

There's no difficulty, I think, in recognising that they're intended to be jokes; and for some, of course, recognition is always enough. It may seem unfair to quote one-liners (however representative) which inevitably invite humbling comparison with Peter de Vries, but they do point up Mr Sharpe's intrinsic weakness: he sets up promising comic situations with some ingenuity, and then delivers the goods in a doggedly limp way. He describes slapstick events as if this was just as hilarious as seeing them; and when stuck, he chummies up to the reader, trying to flatter him into laughter. Consider this exchange between two ill-read publishers:

> 'Who was that dreadful creature who had herself castrated and then wrote a book advertising the fact?' . . . 'You're probably thinking of *In Cold Blood* by someone called McCullers.'

How did you score? Two? Three perhaps? You're clearly in your element, Mr Sharpe seems to be saying; read on, it would be a denial of your character not to. Such flattery, such guile; who could resist?

Derek Mahon

Star Witness

Come Trailing Blood by PAUL SMITH *Quartet* £3.95
Kolonialagent by ROBERT BRAIN *Faber* £3.95
Four Stories by GABRIEL JOSIPOVICI *Menard Press* £1.50

The Irish novelist Paul Smith has been highly, indeed extravagantly, praised by such leaders of thought as the *Observer*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Guardian*, *Punch*, *Time* and the late Dorothy Parker. One critic speaks of genius, another of O'Casey, another of Dickens and Dostoevsky, until one begins to fear that to offer a dissent-

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Christopher Reid

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Among the logo-bearing lorries
we made our way to heaven,

garage-bunting flagging us off,
and a roundabout redded with poppies . . .

A Whitsun-gift, to be at home
in any new idiom:

words on stilts, triangle-language,
the hieroglyphs at every service-station,

Botticelli and I-Spy!
The fancy packages rumbled by.

You don't have to have been to college
to love an English landscape,

or pick up the aesthetics of road-haulage.
Conical knockabout bollards, trees,

the criss-cross of cat's-cradling pylons,
plotted our horizons.

On holiday, on the M.1.,
we stopped from time to time

for a cochlear sticky bun,
coffee and a tetrahedron of cream.

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ing view might be tantamount to announcing one's own mental deficiency. Still, as a courageous Frenchman once remarked, 'I, all alone, am of a different opinion.' On the basis, that is, of having read of Smith only the book under review, first published in the United States in 1959 and only now available on this side of the Atlantic, where its publishers presumably classify it under 'Irish Troubles, present relevance of; should sell well.' Authors of, say, 35 frequently feel baffled and indignant when a reviewer sneers at them for a book they wrote and forgot about at 34; and there is every likelihood that Mr Smith is now thoroughly forgetful of this early work. So perhaps he will forgive me, or wonder idly what on earth I'm talking about, when I say that he has every reason to be so. *Come Trailing Blood* is not a work of genius, or even of talent. It's a work of indiscriminate energy, of slapstick melodrama, written in a style of headlong sentimental rhetoric that recalls, indeed, the worst excesses of O'Casey, but nowhere touches the heart O'Casey knew so well. In the Dublin tenement (Easter Rising period) where Smith's story takes place, all is gratuitous violence of speech and action, the speech laced with 'colourful' turns of phrase, the action conventionally vainglorious. The pathetic fallacy looms large:

> In the sky the stars which had paused in their majestic processionals across the vaulted heavens to witness in the death-flared dusk the final convulsive death-throes of the week-old Revolution moved on . . .

Witness me granny. Stars just don't behave like that, or if they do it's only in books and inflamed imaginations. And that, finally, is what's wrong with *Come Trailing Blood*: everything that happens in it happens 'only in books'. Personally, I didn't believe a word of it, any more than I do of the Easter Rising – itself a species of second-rate literature.

Kolonialagent has an unusual setting, and yet a classic one if one recalls Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (source of Eliot's cryptic epigraph: 'Mistah Kurtz, he dead'). Kurtz, whom we hear of only by report, was a slave-trading, presumably German adventurer of intellectual curiosity and dubious ethics who succumbed to fever and visions of the Abyss ('The horror! The horror!') at a remote upriver station in equatorial Africa. Robert Brain's interesting novel takes as its narrator and protagonist a figure not dissimilar to Kurtz – a German adventurer called, oddly enough, Gustav Conrau, who is pleasantly imprisoned in the royal palace of the Bangwa, a mountain people of the German Cameroun. Conrau's priggish European attitudes are beautifully captured in the stiff diary entries he addresses to his sister at home; but continued exposure to the Bangwa way of life gradually loosens the upper lip. This sort of story has often been told before; but *Kolonialagent* is distinguished by its dramatic and memorable period picture of a unique corner of Africa, where the author has himself worked as an anthropologist.

There is no serious avant-garde in England. At most there are isolated individuals, and in each case that I can think of, intention outruns performance. Such a one is Gabriel Josipovici, whose *Four Stories*, according to the blurb, invite us to consider 'the paradoxes of creativity':

> The writer, by the act of forging a world durable and whole, is often seen as triumphing over time and flux; but he also underscores the discrepancy between the two creations.

I find this sort of thing provocative and stimulating; but what of the actual stuff between the covers? Sometimes it has the phenomenological obsessiveness of the old *nouveau roman*, sometimes the inexpressive clarity of a Zen *koan*, and sometimes it's plain boring; but Josipovici has a painstaking attention to the word, and an obvious intellectual honesty:

> For a moment, in the act of writing, he had thought he had succeeded at last in what he had set out to do. Now, reading it through, he realised that it was only another failure; and it was small comfort to him to understand as well that it was also the nearest he would ever come to success in this particular enterprise.

John Raymond*

Faithful Clerks

The English Sermon Vol. I 1550-1650 edited by Martin Seymour-Smith **Vol. II 1650-1750** edited by C. H. Sisson **Vol. III 1750-1850** edited by Robert Nye *Carcanet* Vol. I £7.90, II and III £6.90 each

Three centuries of English sermons, 53 of them in all, each fortified with an introduction, apparatus and biographical details of the 48 preachers, arranged in three substantial volumes at a cost of nearly £22 the set. What, gasps the reader, in the name of laser beams, Martian planetary inspection and the sociological implications of Bryan Wilson's Riddell Memorial Lectures on *Contemporary Transformations of Religion* (Oxford £2.95), is this stupendous and indigestible indent *for*? It is as if the Ancient of Days itself had come to speak to us. The star-speaker guest-list is impressive: Cranmer, Latimer, Hooker, Andrewes, Donne and Cosin in Vol. I; Taylor, Barrow, Swift, Berkeley and Butler in Vol. II; Wesley and Sterne with an invisible hiatus and then Keble, Maurice and Newman to round off, with a thin Tractarian trickle of Pusey, Manning and Wilberforce tacked on at the end of Vol. III to give the game away to the initiated. But where is the benefit of the exercise?

At the lowest level, the editors might assert that these books are for arts students to take a flying dip into for their cultural education. This is in fact what C. H. Sisson's studiously apologetic general preface largely does. In the deprecating tones of an engineering lecturer telling his class that it might be amusing to look at what human beings did for locomotion before the internal combustion engine, he tells us:

> one does not have to be a Christian to be interested in sermons, nor a non-Christian to be bored by most of them. For . . . three hundred years . . . preaching was one of the main vehicles for current reflections about the way of the world . . . the volumes of sermons now left so largely unread – or read only in short extracts for particularly colourful passages – contain . . . an important branch of literature. Much of the finest English prose is there, an indispensable study for anyone who is interested in the development and decay of the medium.

The smooth, snide transition from development to decay is cleverly managed.

Great sermons that embody reflections on the way of the world have undoubtedly been preached, generally in highly artificial societies – some of Bossuet's, for example. But the greatest are not primarily works of art. The jobbing Rhineland congregation of the 14th century which heard Meister Eckhart tell them one Ascension Day that God is unborn wisdom may not have been aware that they were listening to one of the greatest sermons ever preached. They were probably wondering what the special Inquisitor, who was likely to be already on his way, would do with the Dominican preacher.

Yet, with the best will in the world and allowing for the varieties of theological accent on the part of the individual editors (Puginesque sacramentalism in Robert Nye's case) few of these sermons can be said to strike a positive bull's eye in the reader's mind or feelings. Some of Seymour-Smith's selection are impressive. It is years since I read Latimer's 'Sermon of the Plough' straight through, and I confess to owing less to what the editor says about it than to C.S. Lewis who praises Latimer as a preacher of strength, pith and energy, 'importunate as Hazlitt', a man who would have made a great broadcaster, and takes his text from General Booth's words to Kipling: 'Young feller, if I thought I could win one more soul to the Lord by playing the tambourine with my toes, I'd – I'd learn how.'

A re-reading of Lancelot Andrewes – we are given the 1622 'Sermon on the Nativity' that inspired Eliot's 'Journey of the Magi' – leaves one reader still divided in mind (despite Desmond MacCarthy's mild remonstrances and a great historian's dismissal of the case for Andrewes as brought on false grounds), but leaning in the poetic direction. A word of caution, though. Andrewes was a master of learned ingenuity. But his learning is not ours and, as with Donne, we may be in danger of being over-impressed with his arcane subtleties.

Sisson holds sway – if you can call it sway in the face of so much thin material – over 18th-century preachers. As a portentous trapeze act they were long ago immortalised by Sir Leslie Stephen, in that masterpiece of ironic bedside reading, *The History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, whose uproarious but strictly accurate chapter on the pulpit I would recommend to the newcomer. Sisson rightly laments the absence of the non-Jurors, especially William Law – not only Dr Johnson's moral hortatory favourite but Aldous Huxley's also (he wrote a foreword

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* *This is the last review that John Raymond, who died on* 14 *April, wrote for the* NEW STATESMAN. *Paul Johnson's memoir appears opposite.*

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to his writings) and the real hero of the agnostic Stephen's great book.

I don't think Robert Nye can have read his Leslie Stephen – or not for a long time. Otherwise he would not have juxtaposed John Wesley, about whom Stephen wrote with loving penetration, with Sterne's sermon on the Return of the Prodigal Son, an affecting Shandyean composition that stops far short of André Gide on the same subject and ends by recommending the 18th-century father to send his son off on the Grand Tour with a good clerical tutor. It is Stephen who records Wesley's comment on picking up *A Sentimental Journey* to read on one of his preaching peregrinations: 'Sentimental!' he asks his journal, 'what is that? It is not English. He might as well say "Continental".'

Wesley and Sterne in harness sound oddly enough. When the High Churchmen of the next century are joined to them (though Wesley technically began as a High Churchman) the effect is almost surrealist. Most of Mr Nye's choices are so heavily sacerdotal that (I would suggest) the uninstructed reader, before attempting this portion of English sermonical literature, might take a chance with David Newsome's *The Parting of Friends*, beginning it as a Victorian novel in the Charlotte M. Yonge manner written in the form of a biographical study and going on for as long as his fascination with the narrative carries him. It will add to his reading list but put any amount of flesh on to the dry bones of these clerics. The story of the Wilberforces and Manning – and of Keble, Newman, Pusey and the rest – their families and colleges and parishes, their combination of real goodness and priestly silliness combined with what Thomas Arnold called 'the Gentleman-heresy' makes the book a study of human ambiguity. It is well worth taking the risk.

Paul Johnson

John Raymond 1923-1977

The tragedy of his life, as John Raymond saw it, was that he did not go to university. His parents were actors: Iris Hoey, a brilliant young star of the Twenties, and Cyril Raymond, for many years one of the most consistent players of character-parts in the profession. When the theatres 'went dark' in 1939, John had to be removed from Westminster and, for a short time, was a trainee at Sainsbury's, an episode which he gradually worked up into an anecdotal catastrophe on a level with Dickens's experience in the blacking-factory. No doubt he would have shone at Oxford, a place he loved passionately, and have made an agreeably eccentric don. But he was quite wrong to suppose that the deprivation left him in any way intellectually impoverished. He was easily the best-read man I have ever met. Books, of which he made a splendid collection, were for him more important than life itself. He knew not only the main branches of English literature in minute detail, but almost every by-way. He read copiously in French, being especially fond of Chateaubriand and, still more, Sainte-Beuve, whose writings on the Jansenists led John to make their epoch his own favourite literary territory. He wrote a masterly little study of Simenon.

But what made John, during the 1950s, the leading critical essayist in London, was not simply his wide knowledge of literature; it was, equally, his profound enjoyment of history. Here his range was prodigious, on a scale comparable to Harold Nicolson's, who was in some ways his mentor. The other great influence on his reading was Henry Fairlie, whom he got to know well on *The Times* and considered the finest political journalist of his generation. John was not much concerned with contemporary politics; he thought Britain was going through what he termed 'an age of Weimar'. The only political leader he ever got into *The Times*, so he said, was on the local government of the Channel Isles (of course he wrote many excellent 'Fourth Leaders'). On the other hand, he acquired a firm grasp of how political processes worked, and of how the public spirit of an age shaped its culture. It was this which gave such depth to his 'Books in General' essays, especially on the great classics, and fairly earned him a place alongside Desmond MacCarthy, Raymond Mortimer and Cyril Connolly. He collected some of these pieces in *England's On the Anvil* and *The Doge of Dover*, books which deserve to, and surely will, survive.

John's taste in literature was mandarin; not so in other fields. There was a streak of James Agate about him. He could not get the theatrical blood out of his veins. His theatre reviews, when he could be troubled to do them, were highly professional. Once, hard up, he did a stint as film critic of the *Daily Worker*, ending in a monumental row about 'censorship' which gave him great satisfaction. He remained an avid film-goer, sitting magisterially in the stalls, a corona cigar in one hand, an *Esquimau Gervais* in the other. But for him films and plays were not serious, like books. They were for fun. If he did not like a play he left promptly after the first act. He enjoyed circuses, acrobats, puppet-shows (a taste he shared with Edmund Wilson), farces, musicals. He adored *The Boy Friend*, which he saw more than 40 times, and from which he was once ejected for joining in the choruses. His pleasure in musicals was child-like, as it was in other things. He possessed a magnificent array of toy soldiers, incorporating his boyhood collection but constantly enlarged by choice replicas bought at home and abroad. He relished marching them up and down noisily, until a malevolent burglar struck.

John's considerable histrionic talents, which he inherited, made him a superb raconteur. As he possessed an unrivalled stock of anecdotes culled from his reading, and a faultless memory, his conversation was a performance of a high order. But he could listen too. He was a good and generous friend. He enjoyed the success of literary newcomers. Publishers found his advice well-worth paying for (it was John who spotted that extraordinary best-seller *Room at the Top*). As a literary editor he took great pains to find and cultivate talent, and the back half of the NS sparkled gloriously when he and Janet Adam Smith were in charge.

When he was on form, his company gave incomparable pleasure. He was the best man at my wedding, a role he performed with stupendous dignity. John never feared to mix his sets; he positively delighted to do so. He was at home in the Soho of Maclaren Ross, the Chelsea of John Davenport, the Paris of Nancy Mitford (and Sam White). But he also enjoyed his clubs: the Savile, the Reform, the Beefsteak. He admired courage more than any other virtue, and possessed plenty of it; he would stand up to anyone. He could put them down too; in John's presence one was always on the edge of a minefield. He often warned his friends (let alone enemies) that they would be 'put in the diary'. We shall doubtless see whether this mysterious document exists.

John died comparatively young, but I should be surprised if he was entirely sad to go. He was a patriot of an implacably old-fashioned kind, and did not like what he saw was happening to his country. He deplored the way in which institutions were being subject to relentless and (to him) destructive change, not least the Roman Catholic Church, which he had joined after much internal struggle, and which brought him disillusionment. John believed in the kind of personal heroism now denounced as elitist; he supported ancient ceremonial, dignified usage, exacting scholarship and literary polish. He once said to me: 'I do not like to live in a world full of misprints.' John drove himself hard and always agonised to acquire personal excellence; I have seen him weep over a published article of his, because it was not better. Some of his treasures are to be found in hard covers, or in the dusty files of newspapers and magazines; the rest he banked in the hearts of his friends.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Coleman

T K O

Rocky *Leicester Square Theatre*
Above Us the Earth *The Other Cinema*
When Joseph Returns *Minema, Knightsbridge*
The Harder They Come *The Screen on the Green*
Pussy Talk *Jacey, Trafalgar Square*
The Glitterball and **Fern, the Red Deer** *selected releases*

It has wowed them in the States and they can't be wrong, all the time, even if it is singing their tune: the one about the good-for-nothing who becomes good-for-everything. The name of the game is democracy – here represented by the ethnic potential of the boxing-ring – and the name of the film is *Rocky*, written and starred in by a husky actor desperate for fame. Sylvester Stallone would appear to have had the very sensible idea of thumbing a return trip down memory-lane, his experience of movie-going as a kid, one doesn't know. However it occurred, he (and his director John G. Avildsen) came up with this strange technical knockout. The story, now set in the slums of Philadelphia, is at least as old as the Thirties or Forties and as unabashedly full of triggering clichés. Rocky (Mr Stallone), the 'Italian Stallion', walks and drawls punchily round tenement streets, a nice-guy boxer not above debt-collecting for a loan shark on the side. There is a plain, local girl, the sister of a slobbish companion of his, Paulie, and this shy lady, Adrian (Talia Shire), is actually asked to take off her spectacles – and woolly hat – at one point to reveal the beauty beneath: since Miss Shire was pretty from the start, we are back in simpler cinema days. Garfield was around and anyone could, if Capra was directing, be president, anyone be their pumpkin consort for ever and a day.

Stallone's script has him end up fighting a black pugilist resembling Clay-Ali for the world heavyweight title: Apollo Creed (well pranced through by Carl Weathers) has run out of contenders for reasons too implausible to retail and decides on a three-round dance with a whitey out of the hat. Rocky gets the miraculous chance. But this is a joker, a compulsive talker who lets great and less great stuff meander out of his mouth, a slipshod verbal clown. He has a couple of turtles in a tank as well as a separate fish in a globe, Moby Dick, that he shows them while conversing: 'Hey, you know if you guys could sing and dance I wouldn't be doing this,' thinking of his split eye from a fight. He sees some birds and they look like 'flying candy', he contaminates his environment with his language so that he can shout slurrily at a fellow, 'Are you deaf?' and get the retort, 'No, I'm short.' He updates the old, old story by a kind of Altmanesque, fresh readiness of instant prose, the sort that if you miss a word (and, by God, you do) it doesn't really matter. Stallone has even infiltrated my prose, I note, and that is the effect – if you are prepared to go along with it – of this little, big film: it is very warm and corny and easy. And, let two or three more things be said, a lot of nonsense; an extremely well-assembled lot of nonsense; probably a lesson for the trade. It uses its actors like assaults. Talia Shire, as the *jolie-laide*, is improbably fine considering her tender moments with Rocky are Mickey-Moused in with a bar or so of soapy music; Burt Young, as fat brother Paulie, brings his own angry authenticity to a loser's part; Burgess Meredith has another of his technicolour cameo come-backs (when did he go away?) as a gym manager who wants a piece of the action and, in every sense, gets it. As for the climactic bout, which concludes the revel, guess who turns out the winner.

The answer to that is, of course, locked within me and I threw away the key, but some comment on the ingenuity that has gone to reviving material long felt to be outworn is in order. The film is packed with casual encounters, new-style: Rocky picks a delinquent girleen out of a street-corner group, who figure as a visual, throwaway motif, and talks a hopeless moral line to her – 'Screw you, creepo,' she says, ushered into her doorway, slamming one's old-fashioned expectations in the ribs, or thereabouts. Locations are grimily, exquisitely right. Rocky lifts a wino out of the gutter and plunks him down in a seedy bar, mumbling 'Here's a friend for you' to the next, slumped drinker. There is a sense of creative affluence, an overspill of silly, funny, macabre events. This would have been thought untidy when *Body and Soul*, say, was made: today, we can do with it. Hard to argue that *Rocky* is more naturalistic than its obvious parents (which are not so much fisticuff movies as just downright male Cinderella fantasies); it has a damn near farcical approach to that terminal, ugly battle and a deal of Runyonish happy talk along the way to it. Nevertheless, it pulls its punches in a cunningly contemporary fashion. It urges you to like it, mainly through Stallone's one-man swinging and spouting walk-about, partly through terrific, spendthrift detail, and you end up – with some reluctance – acquiescent.

Karl Francis's *Above Us the Earth* is nowhere concerned to charm and may suffer thereby. He mortgaged his house to do it and tugged a completion grant out of the BFI, but such facts may well get more publicity and attention than the film itself: so enough. Two years ago a pit was closed in Rhymney Valley, South Wales. Francis arrived before the death, became acquainted with the men concerned, gained their confidence to put their reactions on record. This material he has dangerously spliced with some enacted business: a retired miner coughing himself to the grave with emphysema, a hippyish son coming back in time to reproach him for chucking his life away on bosses' behalfs, a wife whose face contains all the grief in the world as she sits on a hospital bench. This is a document rather than a documentary, a personal making-over of real happenings. Staffed by a cast of amateurs, it sometimes looks and sounds like it: the real ringing hollow, a trick the real has when injudiciously tapped. It is a risk, however, that was worth taking, and seeing. The feeling of confrontation I was waiting for eluded me; there is some central, active bitterness absent; but as a raw exercise in pointillism, with the dots of pitmen's faces and their subterranean lamps and the odd dashes of Michael Foot feeding them taffy (the pun arrived, uninvited), it is very much an occasion, going on in the mind after one has left the viewing room. And we do not have such a quantity of home-grown 'political' cinema that we can afford to neglect the decent weight of *Above Us the Earth*.

It would be cosy to carry over the same load of liberalism to the Hungarian *When Joseph Returns* but if there is a message here it escapes me and if there is not then why does the screen positively bulge with pregnant hints? Zsolt Kézdi-Kovács made this remarkably handsome film, which has to do with a scrumpled sort of girl called Maria (marvellously found in Lili Monori), out of an orphanage and into a marriage with a merchant seaman husband. While he is voyaging, she inevitably gets into mischief: an affair, a miscarriage, a late reconciliation with her stuffy mother-in-law (actressy Eva Ruttkai). As a portrait of a certain kind of all-out lifer, it has a little interest: that Maria and her bloke make love, for example, in something resembling 3-D, and her breaking up of a flat she is supposed to be cleaning has its therapeutic effect beyond what it might be doing for her. It seemed to me to be extraordinarily poorly subtitled: strictly from Hungary?

Shortly, but please pay heed. Perry Henzell is a white Jamaican who made the first full-length movie from that island five or so years ago: it is *The Harder They Come*, rotates fairly giddily round a country boy (Jimmy Cliff, the blues and reggae singer) who comes, Dick-Whittington-like, to Kingston on his grandma's death. First he is rooked, finally he makes it, in a melodic, melodramatic sort of way. This is anything but a travelogue and bursts with life. I reviewed it at some length – NS, 14 July, 1972 – after an afternoon in a Brixton cinema fully and merrily inhabited by roughly three Jamaicans: I wish I could repeat the notice and the experience. *Pussy Talk* is a faintly better-than-average item of porn about a talking pussy which runs its owner into sexual *bizarreries*. If you have children, skip this in favour of the two latest CFF products and in especial *The Glitterball*, a quite splendid nonsense about a small round silver object from outer space that is omnivorous and . . .

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Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Justified Sinners

Out of Our Heads *Royal Court*
The Admirable Crichton *Greenwich*
I Made it, Ma – Top of the World! *Theatre Upstairs*

The temperance movement became strong in the 18th century because the devil drink was supposed to sully the soul, a notion that would presumably seem quaint to John McGrath and his 7:84 Company. Nevertheless, he has revised the attack, and with much the same evangelical fervour, on the thoroughly contemporary grounds that the red blood of the working class is being diluted by the distillers. Booze sullies social progress, or, as the cast energetically choruses:

> You can buy a headache from the brewers,
> Or you can turn this world right
> upside-down.

The setting of *Out of Our Heads* is, as you might expect, industrial Glasgow, and the main character, again as one might expect, an underpaid labourer whose idea of recreation is to tank himself half-senseless, exchange aggressive pleasantries with his mates, stagger brutishly home and thump the wife. She, poor cow, or 'miserable bone-faced cow', as he prefers to call her, behaves scarcely less expectedly, wringing her hands over her truant bairns and cringing at her master's elbow as he sottishly gulps his overdue supper. And, just to complete our expectations, an all-seeing shop steward is on hand to deliver patronising editorials over the Grants and McEwans: 'That's what socialism is about – that's what socialism has turned into – keeping a pint in your hand.'

There are times when one feels that the main merit of this dramatic sermon is its relentlessness, its determination to bludgeon the congregation into consent by the sheer single-mindedness of its vision. It is indeed as if we were being called to arms by the Salvation Army, with Bill Riddoch, Elizabeth MacLennon and the other players substituting for the old-time retinue of Saved Sweeps, Hallelujah Fishmongers, Cold-Sober Milkmen and quasi-drunken escape artists diving metaphorically 'through the trap doors into Hell'. But, with McGrath in charge of the script and the production, the dialogue is often less stark and unyielding than the message, the parts not as predictable as the whole. He suggests, for instance, that the bottle is partly the means chosen by Glaswegians to assert their virility from adolescence on, but also partly, and as importantly, a way of overriding rigid taboos, such as those which forbid people in general to express strong emotions without feeling embarrassed, or men in particular to touch each other without being accused of homosexuality. It is a cure for frozen Scottish backbones with, unluckily, many ugly and evil side-effects.

That is interesting, even persuasive – and yet neither it nor anything else takes us nearly far enough. The play's bald argument seems to be that only by abolishing capitalism can we stop the working class wanting to escape a humdrum existence, but that the way it now escapes its humdrum existence effectively stops it abolishing capitalism. How, then, is the circle to be severed? By persuading the government to doom itself by slapping £10 tax on a half of whisky, or dispatching cloaked arsonists into the stills by night, or what? The play has no suggestion to offer. And what if the Scots proletariat did suddenly renounce the demon and all its works – what then? Would it really lavish all that liberated time and energy on organising itself and hustling in the socialist millennium? Or would Mr McGrath find himself obliged to write yet another play deploring his fellow-citizens' lack of political dedication?

I'm tempted to call the Barrie of *The Admirable Crichton* a more subversive playwright than McGrath, or at any rate *this* McGrath; but I suppose it has to be admitted that his island utopia is dauntingly hierarchical in character, a strict meritocracy in which one man wears the boots and everyone else licks them, a butler's kingdom. All the same, the voice of the Kirriemuir weaver's son still rings across the decades, twitting the English establishment for its indolence, stupidity, hypocrisy and complacency, and reminding it that, as Max Beerbohm put it, 'though our slaves are still servile enough, superficially, many of them are in all respects our superiors'. Certainly, Crichton is in all respects of mind, imagination and physical flair immeasurably the superior of his belted employer, whom equality of opportunity promptly reduces to 'a jolly-looking labourer'. As Lady Mary bluntly declares, back home in Mayfair, 'You are the best man among us'. 'On an island, my lady, perhaps,' replies the perfect butler, 'but in England, no.' Comes her clincher: 'Then there is something wrong with England.' There was in 1902, and there is in 1977, which is why the play, for all the whimsy rippling its surface, is still worth reviving; and, indeed, it surprises me very much that one of the great national companies hasn't yet tackled it.

A more thoroughly accomplished cast than the one at Greenwich would, I daresay, point Barrie's lines more deftly and extract more laughter from them. The problem posed by the first act – how to establish a stately atmosphere without making the pace equally so – has yet to be solved. But from the second act onwards Mike Ockrent's production is as satisfactory as straitened circumstances will allow, and in some ways more so. Frank Barrie's Crichton has (as he probably should) a waxen, mechanical appearance at first, rather as if someone had wound him up and sent him trundling to and fro across a window at Montague Burton's, but he snaps into life amid the island greenery (as he certainly should) with a fierce, dictatorial bark of "come, bring that bucket!"; and there are humorous, if somewhat unambitious performances from Ursula Mohan, Trevor Baxter and others. Visits to the social laboratory, case-studies of class mobility, aren't usually so diverting.

I Made It Ma repays a layman's interest in a smaller way. It is 'devised and directed', whatever that means, by Tim Pywell and John Chapman; it's plausibly played by Brian Hall, Albert Welling and (especially) Caroline Embling as a pert, pushy waif, a kind of female Artful Dodger; and its subject is the criminal, the East End variety, displaced from its natural habitat by a changing world and by no means a species to envy. Indeed, the play defines quite a new social problem, that of the successful gangster's wife, going neurotic from boredom in suburban Wanstead. There must be less deserving causes.

Music

Andrew Clements

Expatriate

Berne String Quartet *ICA*

When last year's Venice Biennale devoted two concerts to the music of a British composer in his early thirties, the Italians couldn't believe that none of his major works had been heard in London. But for several years now Brian Ferneyhough's almost total neglect in his native country has been taken for granted. While the opportunities for young composers have steadily improved, he has been ignored. Born in Coventry in 1943, Ferneyhough studied at the Royal Academy of Music before winning a scholarship to work on the Continent in the mid-Sixties. Since then he's rarely returned, living in Germany and Switzerland and cleaning up the prizes at many important competitions.

Meanwhile in Britain the myths have grown. His scores look ferociously complex and meticulously notated; the difficulties of performing them and of apprehending them were apparently considerable. But at last we have a chance to assess him. Underwritten by an RCA contract and BBC recording, the Berne String Quartet was able to introduce the Sonatas for String Quartet, written in 1967 and the first of Ferneyhough's compositions to gain general acclaim. It is a work of very considerable achievement. The idiom of the Sonatas is, loosely, post-Webernian. Ferneyhough is said to dislike the use of the word 'serial', but the nearest approach to the feel of his writing is the work of the total serialists of the post-war years, here enriched with a wide range of effects minutely calculated to extract the maximum expressive mileage. The emotional range of the music is enormous, the tension which it engenders intensified by the demands it makes of its players. The work is built from 24 sections, varying in length from a few bars to extended arguments; the flow of music is interrupted three times for cadenzas for viola, the two violins and cello, sometimes accompanied, sometimes alone. The coherence of the argument is en-

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sured by recurring types of material moving in and out of prominence, sometimes in phase, sometimes against each other. This multilayered approach is occasionally reminiscent of Elliott Carter, but Carter's music lacks Ferneyhough's sensuality: there is no passage in any of Carter's quartets that approaches the sheer beauty of the closing bars of the Sonatas.

After he completed the Sonatas, Ferneyhough studied with the Swiss composer Klaus Huber. The remainder of the Berne Quartet's programme consisted of Huber's *Moteti-Cantiones*, another highly structured work of short, linked sections, impressive for its control and refinement and looking back to Berg's *Lyric Suite*. The Berne Quartet played both works with immense assurance. A complete concert of Ferneyhough's music is planned for the autumn in London and the BBC and Boulez have commissioned a new orchestral work from him, enticingly called *La Terre est un Homme*. By then our picture of him should be clearer. At the very least, he is the most accomplished British composer of his generation.

Television

Ian Hamilton

Parsons' Pleasure

It wasn't easy for straights to stay straight-faced throughout the whole of *Everyman*'s BBC-1 study of Gay Christians, but I swear to God we did our best. Calling the thing *The Lord's My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay* seemed sheepishly provocative of hetero guffaws, and there were odd moments in the commentary that seemed idly to be testing the depth of our compassion for these puzzled souls – we visited a recruiting ceremony at an all-homosexual church and were made to scan the expectant faces of the congregated gays: 'Here they are, getting ready to receive a new member.' Minutes later, the lot of them linked arms to warble one of their own hymns: 'We will walk together, we will walk hand in hand.' Well, really.

On the whole, though, the intention was to ponder the theological difficulties that ensue from having parsons and their pals practise the 'licentious and idolatrous deed, as crusty old St Paul once called it, and the treatment was decently perturbed. There is a story of Humphrey Bogart meeting Rock Hudson for the first time, looking him up and down, and then declaring with dismissive mirth: 'You don't look much like a rock to me, Rock.' One had a similar reaction to most of the participants in this debate: gay, old-style, they weren't. And indeed it must be fairly depressing to have to comb through the good book and 're-examine' the well-known texts of ancient queer-bashers. Even so, there was a valiant hopefulness in many of the new readings. Sodom, it turns out, can be said to have been more notable for its gang assaults on vestals than for buggery; and when Leviticus came out strongly against coming out he also placed a fierce veto on shrimps and rare steaks. And, of course, as one theologian tentatively put it: 'The Son of God Himself grew up to be a single man.'

There was much doleful fussing about 'natural law'. The Pope's edict that homosexual acts are 'intrinsically disordered' caused some passing worry, and it was agreed half-heartedly that the sanctity of family life might be somewhat imperilled if the new theology were really to catch on. Everyone knew, though, that the real issue was not whether but how the Church would manage to adjust to the now glaring fact that some of its best chaps like chaps best. On the human interest level, there were one or two unnerving portraits. We were shown a Christian who, believing himself wrong to be gay, had become celibate – 'I am now completely fulfilled – I love and can be loved within the Christian family' – and a vicar who was married and had four adopted children but hadn't laid a finger on his wife in years. She sat listening respectfully as he described how repulsive he would find it to bestow the merest pat, and then she touchingly argued for a love that transcends that kind of thing. We weren't entirely sure that hubby was with her all the way here, but he certainly didn't in the least mind her thinking as she did.

Another curious marriage was presented to our view on *André Previn Meets . . .* (BBC-1) where we found the gnome-like André being as vacantly ingratiating towards his own wife (the pixie Mia Farrow) as he normally is to total strangers. 'How did you get your first part? This may seem like a set-up but I've never asked you this.' Well, either it seemed like a set-up or André isn't half as interested in his nearest and dearest as he makes out he is. Not that it mattered much, since Farrow spent most of the show sucking her finger or toying with her dungarees while her co-guest Julie Andrews battled for air-time with the garrulous Previn. It was all dumb showbiz chat – 'It was unbelievable, I mean, you know, really' – and, unbelievably, the first of a new series.

Still, better to be married to Madam Mia than to Madam Mao, if *Panorama*'s acerbic portrait was anything to go by. Showbiz, we were asked to believe, was her trouble too. Thwarted in her early acting ambitions by the smart set in Shanghai, she set herself to seduce political heavies and ended up with the biggest catch of all, the poet Mao. Through him, she was able to strike back at her old opponents; her success in doing so seems to be measurable by the fix that she's now in: 'If you want to get a large number of Chinese really angry, you stop them looking at their operas – and that is what she did.' She replaced emperors and monsters with proles and tractors, but in private – it was here alleged – she enjoyed watching the lowest kind of Western films. Interestingly this seemed to stick in people's throats more than some of her more expansive abuses of her power. This was an absorbing *Panorama* and presented hitherto unseen material, but where and how did they manage to get hold of the Mao letters to his wife which were quoted near the end? There was a plaintiveness in these sick old man's letters to his active younger wife that made the programme's almost exclusively political account of her career seem rather brisk and shallow: 'I am ill, but you do not have an understanding heart. Do you know that everybody has bad feeling towards you? I am 80. Why don't you have more sympathy?' If once she did, we wouldn't have known it from this unremittingly hostile version of her life.

Architecture

Andrew Saint

Shell-Shock

Hawksmoor *Whitechapel Art Gallery until 1 May*

With four major Hawksmoor churches within a couple of miles of the gallery, it was a stroke of imagination to locate an exhibition on his work at the Whitechapel. The pity is that this shoestring show has not been more firmly and logically rooted in a sense of place. True, an easily-missed map and some bumf in the foyer will tell you how to get to the churches, and these together with a characteristically splendid London Transport leaflet and poster devoted to Hawksmoor ought to ensure that his fans will be crawling about in colonies around Bank, Limehouse, Spitalfields and Wapping over the next few months. Nevertheless architecture being a hard thing to exhibit without some contrasting sense of intimacy or of scale, Hawksmoor's relentlessly unpictorial baroque elevations and plans set against the lean white walls of the Whitechapel will not easily entice the casual visitor. Some fine photographs help, but in the context of the East End an exhibition on Hawksmoor's London churches, treated for their local interest as well as their architecture, would surely have been more topical and accessible.

However Nicholas Hawksmoor was a big and bold enough architect for his bracing Roman vision to burst untrammelled through any obstacle. Thus each of his famous and forlorn East End churches Christ Church Spitalfields, St George in the East and St Anne Limehouse, though set in its own special sea of decay, resolutely refuses to submit to picturesqueness. The work of any other English architect would have mellowed into a crumbling, melancholy sweetness, but Hawksmoor's elemental Baroque towers and chilly textures of Portland stone continue to arrest and to command, despite the best attempts of bombing (St George), burning (St Anne) and lingering decay (Christ Church). St George in the East, only a shell now concealing a little modern church stuck cleverly within, is the harshest and loneliest, with a bristling octagon-topped tower and cranky quartet of flanking pepperpots looming over the wastes of Ratcliffe Highway. St Anne (open on Fridays), calmer and longer though equally

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massive, and well restored after fire in 1850, still has some groups of good buildings nearby, including a witty Edwardian church institute which parodies Hawksmoor's vocabulary in bluff red terracotta. But present attention is particularly fixed on Christ Church Spitalfields, which has been closed since 1958 because of the state of the structure but is open on Saturday mornings for the duration of the exhibition. Behind its bold west tower and steeple lies an interior which not only retains much original work but also, to judge from a recent experiment, boasts excellent acoustics. The plan now is to open the church for occasional concerts to help raise funds for repairs.

These three churches, together with St Alfege Greenwich, St Mary Woolnoth and St George Bloomsbury, making six which Hawksmoor designed as surveyor under the 'Fifty New Churches' Act of 1711, are pre-eminently the monuments from which to judge his work. Before then he had been overshadowed by others, first by his mentor Wren, whom he joined as a youth in about 1680, later by the flashier Vanbrugh, with whom Hawksmoor worked at Blenheim and Castle Howard, designing the celebrated austere mausoleum at the latter house. The lustre of these names together with Hawksmoor's steady if obsessive temperament (even Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, that great scourge of architects, seems to have found herself unable to quarrel with him) have meant that he has often been thought of as a tradesman or reliable professional clerk-of-works, only half-educated and untainted in the main by intellectual notions.

But the evidence of the exhibition and the churches argues quite otherwise. For instance, when new churches for Stepney were first canvassed under the Tory Act of 1711, Hawksmoor produced a remarkable plan (here exhibited) precisely reflecting the 17th-century High Anglican ideal of a return to the religious customs of early Christianity. This 'Basilica after the Primitive Christians' was to be built free-standing on a site in Bethnal Green according to a plan of the fourth century ('ye purest times of Christianity'), with side as well as end entrances, a charity school in the vaults, burial well away from the church, and a 'Septum or Enclosure' all round so as to 'keep off Filth, Nastiness and Brutes'. Several of these ideas found more than an echo in the churches as built, which all contrast markedly not just in massiveness but in plan with what Wren had suggested for the new churches, namely a set of conventional Protestant edifices like his own St James Piccadilly. And in case the issue remains in doubt, Hawksmoor's obituarist said of him in 1736:

> He was perfectly skill'd in the History of Architecture, & could give you an exact Account of all the famous Buildings, both Antient & Modern, in every Part of the World . . . He was bred a Scholar, & knew as well the Learned as the Modern tongues. He was a very Skilful Mathematician, Geographer, & Geometrician.

By the time these words were written, the facile principles of Palladianism had triumphed. Under the dominance of Whiggish 'good taste', which was for 80 years to produce an entirely derivative public architecture, the architects of the English Baroque were scorned as eccentric and anti-theoretical rather than original. Even Pope was to applaud Lord Burlington's 'noble rules' and to sneer at how Hawksmoor and his colleagues would

> Load some vain Church with old
> Theatric state,
> Turn Arcs of triumph to a Garden-gate.

By how wide a mark these Augustan critics failed to perceive the genius of Nicholas Hawksmoor, a visit to the Whitechapel show, or better still to the East End churches, will indicate.

Cookery

Hilary Spurling

In the Bag

'When good King Arthur ruled this land, He was a goodly king. He stole three pecks of barley meal To make a bag pudding.' The peculiarly English tradition of sweet or savoury bag puddings goes back, if not to Arthurian times, at least to well before Ralegh brought back potatoes from his first American expedition, and gave some to Lord Burghley to plant in his garden in the Strand. Twenty years later, in 1604, the Lady Elynor Fettiplace recorded various recipes for tobacco syrups and waters which she got, according to her own handwritten notes, from 'Sir W. ralleigh' (this was the year of his downfall, trial and imprisonment in the Tower). But she gives only one for potatoes: a method of preserving the roots with myrrh and ambergris in a sweet syrup of orange juice and rosewater.

The exotic, alien potato lived on to wipe out in due course the native bag pudding – yet another casualty of the class struggle, though a stout rearguard action was fought up to the beginning of this century when boiled or baked batter puddings, flavoured with herbs, were still served in outlying parts with almost any roast meat, and in Durham with duck or goose. Now the sole survivor of a long line is Yorkshire pudding, even that in a sadly enfeebled state, since it used to come with mutton, pork, rabbit and hare as well as with beef. Anyone inclined to right this ancient wrong may care to try Lady Fettiplace's recipe for a 17th-century bag pudding which turns out something like a pale yellow soufflé flecked with green, tastes as elegant as it looks, and gives no more trouble than peeling potatoes.

To make a Bagge pudinge

Take a thick Creame and make yt somewhat hotter than bloud warme, then take halfe a dozen egges and beate them well and mingle them with your Creame, then ad to yt a little parsley and winter savory cut very smale and some nutmegges, suger and a little salte, then put to yt as much Crumes of bread and fine flower as will make yt thicker than Batter for pancakes, then wette your bagge in cold water, and put yt in and when your water boyles put him into yt, yt must not be boiled with meate but alone in fayre water.

The last instruction was necessary because, in old English kitchens, a good many items in cloths or kettles were suspended in the great iron cauldron which heated water over an open fire. I use half cream and half milk (or all milk, since Jacobean cream was thinner than ours), and vary the herbs according to what kind of roast or grilled meat the pudding is to accompany. Parsley and mint go well with lamb, sage (and finely chopped onions, if you like) with pork, thyme and marjoram with almost anything. To a pint of cream take three eggs, two rounded tablespoons of flour and four ounces of fine white breadcrumbs. Beat these very well with the eggs before adding the warmed cream, then put in salt, pepper, a large handful of chopped fresh herbs and a generous grating of nutmeg. Leave out the sugar unless you like a sweet taste. Bold cooks may boil the batter in a floured, closely woven linen cloth but a greased basin is easier (don't fill it by any means full as the pudding will rise). Cover the basin with two layers of buttered paper or foil, securely tied; lower it into a saucepan containing enough boiling water to come half way up the sides; simmer it gently for about an hour and a quarter; and serve it at once, or the pudding will flop.

King Arthur's speciality was of course sweet, and extremely rich ('A bag pudding the King did make, And stuffed it well with plums, And in it put great lumps of fat As big as my two thumbs'), designed for huge feeders like Lancelot Gobbo. Lady Fettiplace gives a couple of sweet bag puddings along much the same lines, stuffed with currants and 'great Raisins of the Sun, the stones pulled out', spiced with nutmeg or cloves and mace, and enriched with melted butter. Alternatively you can make a lighter and more delicate pudding from the original recipe, by leaving out the savoury herbs and adding a sprig of rosemary instead, or a bay leaf with grated orange peel.

April is also the time for making Violet Balles ('Take the best blew Violets that you can get . . .'), Serope of Violets (a digestive drink, 'excellent good for the Unnatural heat of the stomack') and all sorts of sweetmeats flavoured and coloured with flower petals. The prettiest of these is marbled Sugar Plate (a paste made from sugar softened with rosewater, stiffened with gumdragon and beaten for hours in a mortar), coloured in layers and twisted together rather like a stick of striped rock. Here is a seasonal receipt, using Perdita's favourite spring flowers and written down probably about half a dozen years before *The Winter's Tale* was first performed:

> First make a piece of white sugar plate, then with the iuice of violets colour a piece blew, then with colour of Cowslops colour another piece yellowe, then roule out the white the blew and the yellow, but roule the white thickest, then lay the white first, lay the blew on the top, then lay another piece of white, & then the yellow, so lay it one upon another, then turn it up round, like a loaf, then roule it in your hand in a long round piece, then cut it out in thin pieces, & make it into what fashion you will, & so dry it.

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Ballet

Oleg Kerensky

High Jump

Béjart and the Ballet of the Twentieth Century *Coliseum*
London Contemporary Dance Theatre *Sadler's Wells*
The Royal Ballet *Covent Garden*

Béjart-time is once again boom-time at the Coliseum box-office, but his bizarre mixture – standard classical and modern dance movements, vaguely literary and philosophical ideas, and music of all styles and none – no longer seems to arouse all its former enthusiasm. The opening scenes of *The Triumphs of Petrarch*, a 90-minute extravaganza, were received in chilly silence at the royal gala and a number of people left the cheaper seats before the end. Processional entrances for the 'triumphs', with an elaborately decorated chariot, were spectacular but repetitive. Even the attractive renaissance backdrop remained obstinately the same, despite lighting changes, for all six episodes. Suzanne Farrell, as the poet's muse, had little or no opportunity to show what a glorious lyric ballerina she has become with New York City Ballet; Patrice Touron as Death did some exciting rapid dancing and Jorge Donn in the strenuous title-role was impressively sinuous. As usual with Béjart, the men dominate, and move very athletically.

The poverty of Béjart's choeographic invention is accepted by many of his admirers. His success rests on spectacle and theatricality. Even his ability to tell a story in visual terms is extremely limited. *Petrarch* is virtually incomprehensible without careful reading of the programme. How could anyone know that a stylised wrestling match between two near-naked men represents Time defeating Fame? *The Firebird* ends with what might seem to be a gay mating ritual – Yvan Marko and Patrice Touron in scanty red tights, elegantly leaning backwards while pressing crotch to crotch. *Ce Que L'Amour Me Dit*, to the last three movements of Mahler's 3rd symphony, ends with the hero cradling a young man in his arms. But these things are not what they appear. The first represents the rebirth of the Firebird, or partisan leader, or spirit of resistance; the second, according to an interview with Béjart in *The Times*, shows the son Mahler so dearly wanted. 'Sometimes audiences misunderstand what this boy represents.'

Nothing in the London Contemporary Dance Theatre's Sadler's Wells season causes me to modify my usual reactions. Robert North's *Meeting and Parting* follows closely in the steps of Robbins's *Dances at a Gathering*; it is charming and nicely danced, though necessarily impoverished by the absence of classical technique and virtuosity. Jane Dudley's *Harmonica Breakdown* is a witty little solo, admirably danced by Siobhan Davies, which could have come out of a negro revue or a Paul Taylor dance. Quickly forgetting the rest, I turn with relief to the Garden, where John Neumeier has made his first major work for a British company and where Baryshnikov has been dazzling us in *Romeo and Juliet* and *La Fille Mal Gardée*.

Neumeier and Béjart are the most successful choreographers in western Europe today. Both are fascinated by Mahler; the contrast between their methods and styles, however, is the contrast between Neumeier's extreme musicality and originality and Béjart's cavalier use of music and of existing dance steps. Neumeier's version of the complete 3rd symphony in Hamburg has been widely hailed as a masterpiece; *The Fourth Symphony*, created for our Royal Ballet, is possibly not in that class but is a beautiful and moving work, although its story line – a boy is born, learns about love and life, and goes off into the world leaving his parents returning to the innocence of childhood – is not immediately obvious.

The ballet provides Wayne Sleep with the important created role he has long deserved, and displays nearly all the best dancers in the company to advantage, especially Lynn Seymour and David Wall (the parents) and Denise Nunn (Sleep's first love). Like most Neumeier ballets, it demands close concentration from the audience; on the first night, it got the biggest ovation for any new ballet in years, except for Ashton's *A Month in the Country*.

Baryshnikov's Romeo is now less youthful-looking than before, but no less ardent and brilliantly danced. His Colas in *Fille* is, incredibly, the best ever (I have not forgotten Blair, Gable, Wall or Nureyev). Baryshnikov jumps higher, exudes more boyish *joie de vivre*, and above all finds more humour, even guying his own passion, without ever stepping out of character or being unfaithful to Ashton's choreography. Ann Jenner, an unduly neglected ballerina, sparkled as Lise, while Garry Grant as Alain and Ronald Emblem as Widow Simone were also inspired by this altogether outstanding occasion.

Weekend Competition

No 2460 **Set by Jim Anthony**

Bertrand Russell's famous declension 'I am firm, you are stubborn, he is a pig-headed fool' needs updating. Competitors are asked to develop 'I wash regularly', 'I have normal appetites', and similar protestations; by 6 May.

Result of No 2457
Set by Peter Alexander

We asked for verses on the policeman's right to strike.

Report **by PC 49**

We in the Force were very heartened by the solidarity shown by you, the ordinary public, in your rhymes. As many of you pointed out, the recent so-called 'porn trials' only went to prove how grossly underpaid the lads in blue really are. While proceeding with the judging, I could not fail to remark on a sour note here and there: Mr Towling's address has been conveyed to his local section house, and I for one do not envy him next Saturday night. Customary remuneration is hereby made in the sum of £5; the notes have been properly laundered.

Today we have carrying banners. Yesterday
We had picketing. And tomorrow morning
We have ballots, including rigging of same.
But today,
We have carrying banners, except, of course,
The banners are what we have not got. What
they had not got
Was pot, but that was easily arranged.
They will say 'More pay' and 'The Right
to strike'.
To strike hard, knee in crutch, no
Mark to show. But who is there to treat us so?
Accompanying banners are chanted slogans,
Extempore and rude, from the list
already issued.
And rued, as the saying is. Long-haired
student gits
And nig-nogs, that don't show bruises easy.

HARRISON EVERARD

Down among the bank vaults,
Briskly tunnelling through,
We used to go a-burgling,
For fear of men in blue.

We used to split the gang up,
And sneak in two by two,
And hide our get-away cars
For fear of men in blue.

But since they're all on strike now,
We'll cut out all that fuss,
And simply come and carry
The swag off in a bus.

PETER PETERSON

Give the Fuzz the 'Right to Strike'?
Cor 'struth! I never 'eard the like.
What they oughter – is *remove* it –
I've got the bruises, mate, to prove it!

TERRY TOWLING

Point of order, Brother Chairman, ain't it time
we took a stance
Re the matter of them policemen in *The*
Pirates of Penzance?
Us grass-root level strikers move that at this
point in time
We take united umbrage at this
blackleg pantomime.

Considering all factors, we shall not stand
idly by
While they make us tools of ridicule before
the public eye.
If the picket-line of Equity was standing in
the rain
Ow'd they like to see me playin' 'Amlet up the
Drury Lane?

They'd *soon* close their ranks and strike a blow
for solidarity,
Like what we do when they pisstake to
incite hilarity
Brothers! We'll not fail or falter, No! nor
shall we sheathe the lance!
Till we've shopped them soppy coppers from
The Pirates of Penzance.

GERRY HAMILL

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Tony Miles

Chess

No. 30 Candidates' Matches

All but one of the first round candidates matches have now been completed. The results are: Portisch (Hungary) beat Larsen (Denmark) 6½-3½ (5 wins to 2, 3 draws); Korchnoy (Stateless) beat Petrosian (USSR) 6½-5½ (2-1, 9 draws); Polugaevsky (USSR) beat Mecking (Brazil) 6½-5½ (1-0, 11 draws). Spassky-Hort is, at the time of writing, 6-6 (1-1, 10 draws) and further sets of 2 games will be played until a result is achieved. In the next round Korchnoy meets Polugaevsky, and Portisch the winner of Spassky-Hort. It now seems quite likely that Korchnoy, having overcome his greatest rival, will cause the Russians severe embarrassment by going on to win the series and play the world championship match with Karpov. There has been almost as much incident off the board as on. The atmosphere at the Korchnoy-Petrosian match was so bitter that the two never shook hands or talked to each other, even to the extent that all offers of draws went via the arbiter! On the other hand the Spassky-Hort match has been so friendly (too friendly according to many Icelandic spectators) that when Spassky became ill, having already used up his allocation of postponements, Hort allowed one of his to be used until Spassky recovered. Mecking, rather a jumpy character at the best of times, apparently found the occasion too great a strain on his nerves. When he lost the second game he fired his second, Mariotti. There were rumours of a nervous breakdown. He completed the match, but Polugaevsky drew the remaining 10 games to go into the next round.

This week's game comes from the Larsen-Portisch encounter, and further illustrates what nervous affairs these matches are:

White: L. Portisch Black: B. Larsen

1. P-QB4, N-KB3; 2. N-QB3, P-K3; 3. N-B3, P-Q4; 4. P-Q4, QN-Q2; 5. P x P, P x P; 6. B-N5, B-K2; 7. P-K3, 0-0; 8. B-Q3, P-B3; 9. Q-B2, R-K1; 10. 0-0, N-B1; 11. QR-K1. This move received some criticism, but Portisch played it more than once in the match. **11. . . . B-K3; 12. Q-N1.** A different way of playing for the standard 'minority attack' with P-QN4. **12. . . . P-QR4; 13. P-QR3, N(B3)-Q2; 14. B x B, R x B; 15. P-QN4, P x P; 16. Q x P!** If 16. P x P black can play 16. . . . P-QN4 followed by N-QN3-B5. Now white keeps some pressure down the QN file. **16. . . . N-QN3; 17. P-QR4, N-B1; 18. R-R1, N-Q3; 19. P-R5, B-B4; 20. B x B, N x B; 21. KR-N1, N-Q3; 22. N-Q2, N-K3; 23. Q-N6.** White obviously stands better, but now came an atrocious blunder which decided the game and, effectively, the match. **23. . . . Q-QB1?? 24. N x P, R-Q2; 25. N-QB3, N-KB4; 26. N-B3, R-R3; 27. Q-N2, N-Q3; 28. N-QR4, Q-K1; 29. N-N6, R-Q1; 30. Q-B2, P-R3; 31. N-B4, N-QN4; 32. R-Q1, Q-K2; 33. P-R3, N(3)-B2; 34. QR-N1, N-Q4; 35. R-N3, Q-K3; 36. N(3)-K5, R(3)-R1; 37. N-Q3, Q-N3; 38. R-QB1, Q-N4; 39. K-R2, R-K1; 40. N-B5, R-R2; 41. R-Q1, P-R4; 42. P-K4, N x P.** Desperation, but worth a try. **43. R x N, N-B5; 44. N-K3, N x NP; 45. N x N, Q-K4ch; 46. P-B4, Q x R; 47. R-KN3, Q-N5; 48. P-K5, Q x RP; 49. N-Q7, P-R5; 50. N-B6ch, K-B1; 51. R x P! Resigns.**

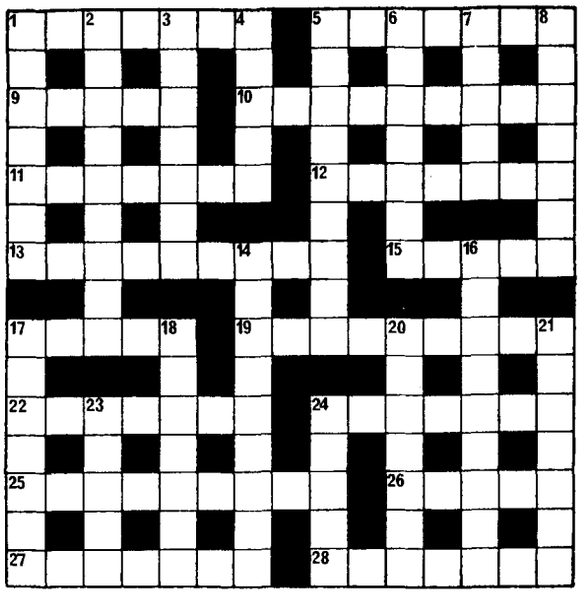
Problem 30 has been held over until next week.

Solution to Problem 28:

1. R-N7ch, K-B3; 2. P-N5ch! P x P (or 2. . . . K-B4; 3. R-K5 mate); 3. R(N7)-B7ch, K-N3; 4. P-B5ch, K-R3; 5. R-KR7 mate.

Weekend Crossword 1212

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1212, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 3 May.



ACROSS

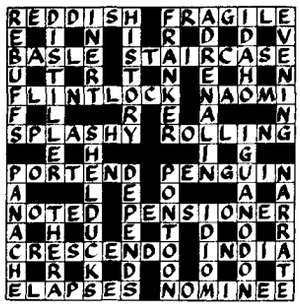
1. One of these rods would do for a fish (7).
5. Powerful animal which breaks log and rail (7).
9. Pope not peasant (5).
10. Undershaft's wife takes one to market by train (9).
11. Legal annoyance at hostile demonstration? (7).
12. Understatement to count among untruths (7).
13. Country place which is remote and surrounded by the opposite of a large number (5, 4).
15. Compete afresh as manager (5)
17. Philosopher gives man a means of going back (5).
19. Am out of England team, and its reorganisation is complicated (9).
22. Kind to learner in what becomes hard (7).
24. The French embargo on a foreign power (7).
25. Subjection keeps us riveted in disorder (9).
26. Novelist who uses backward-looking material (5).
27. An imposter makes a call to arms (7).
28. Easy chances for models (7).

DOWN

1. Gave the lead domestically (7).
2. Making a grave alteration (9).
3. Where agriculture starts among the starving (7).
4. Black and so not employable without upper-class lead (5).
5. Bird having sense of responsibility about most of the fruit (9).
6. Cock or duck in list (7).
7. The smallest goes in while a standard size doesn't fit (5).
8. Entertainer who must have a sitter in (7).
14. At the beginning of the afternoon we stopped work, being full of wonder (9).
16. Saint spends a part of Church year in a plant (9).
17. It can be used cuttingly although it is a hackneyed proverb (7).
18. Shelter for Everton? (7).
20. Small number consecrated as most illustrious (7).
21. Means in this side no test player is found (7).
23. 'It is the very —— of the moon' *(Othello)* (5)
24. City is first, we hear (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1210



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Continued from p. 548

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Vol. 93 No. 2405

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: A lecture entitled: 'Paternalism and Overheating: Institutional Background of Chronic Excess Demand' will be given by Professor János Kornai (University of Stockholm) at Birkbeck College, Room 401, 7-15 Gresse Street, W1 at 6 p.m. on 27 April. Admission free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (Gower St, WC1E 6BT). Freud Memorial Lecture in Psychoanalysis by Professor Richard Sennett, 'Crises of Authority', Monday 2 May at 5.30. Admission free, without ticket.

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CIVIL LIBERTIES. Public meeting to launch N. London group of NCCL. Tues. 26 April 8 p.m. Rosslyn Hall, Willoughby Rd, NW3. Speakers Patricia Hewitt, Robin Corbett MP.

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MAPAM—'A Conservative View', speaker Lynne Reid Banks. Sun. 24 April 8.15 p.m. 37 Broadhurst Gardens, NW6.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 23 April 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 26 April 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Fri. 29 April 7.30 p.m. Celebration of Buddha Day at Caxton Hall. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

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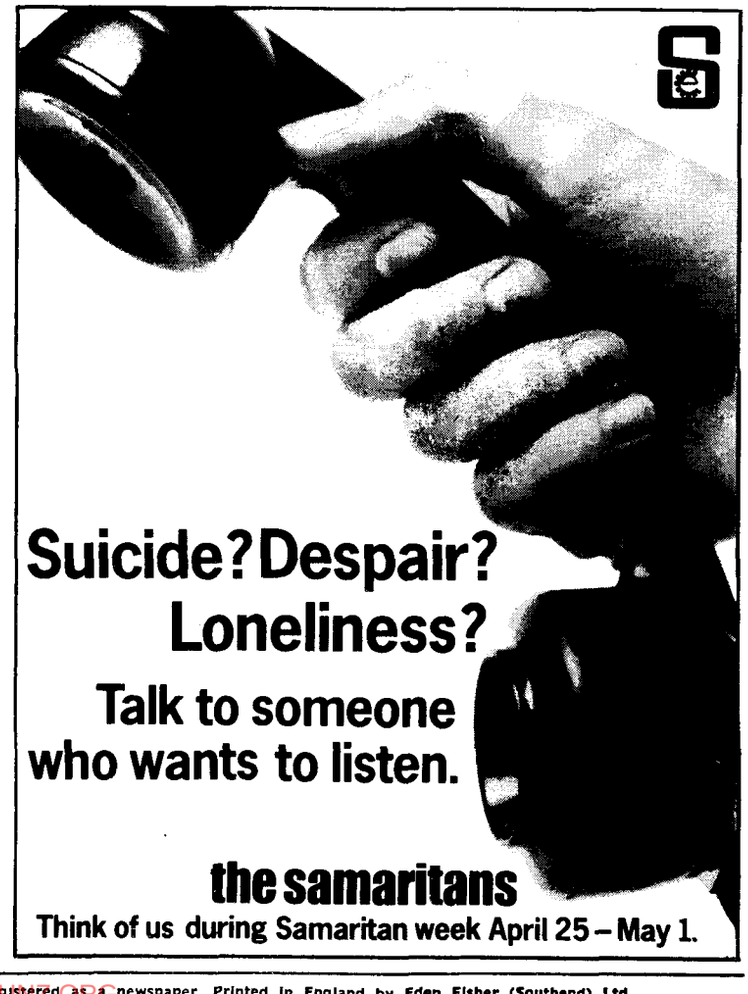
Applicants, analysed or intending to have an analysis with a recognised psychotherapist and having academic or professional experience relevant to working with people.

The three year course comprises weekly seminars, ongoing groups, supervision for first patients.

Write to.
The Secretary, A.G.I.P., 29 St Marks Crescent, London NW1.

COURSES continued on p. 547


Suicide? Despair?
Loneliness?
Talk to someone who wants to listen.
the samaritans
Think of us during Samaritan week April 25 – May 1.

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